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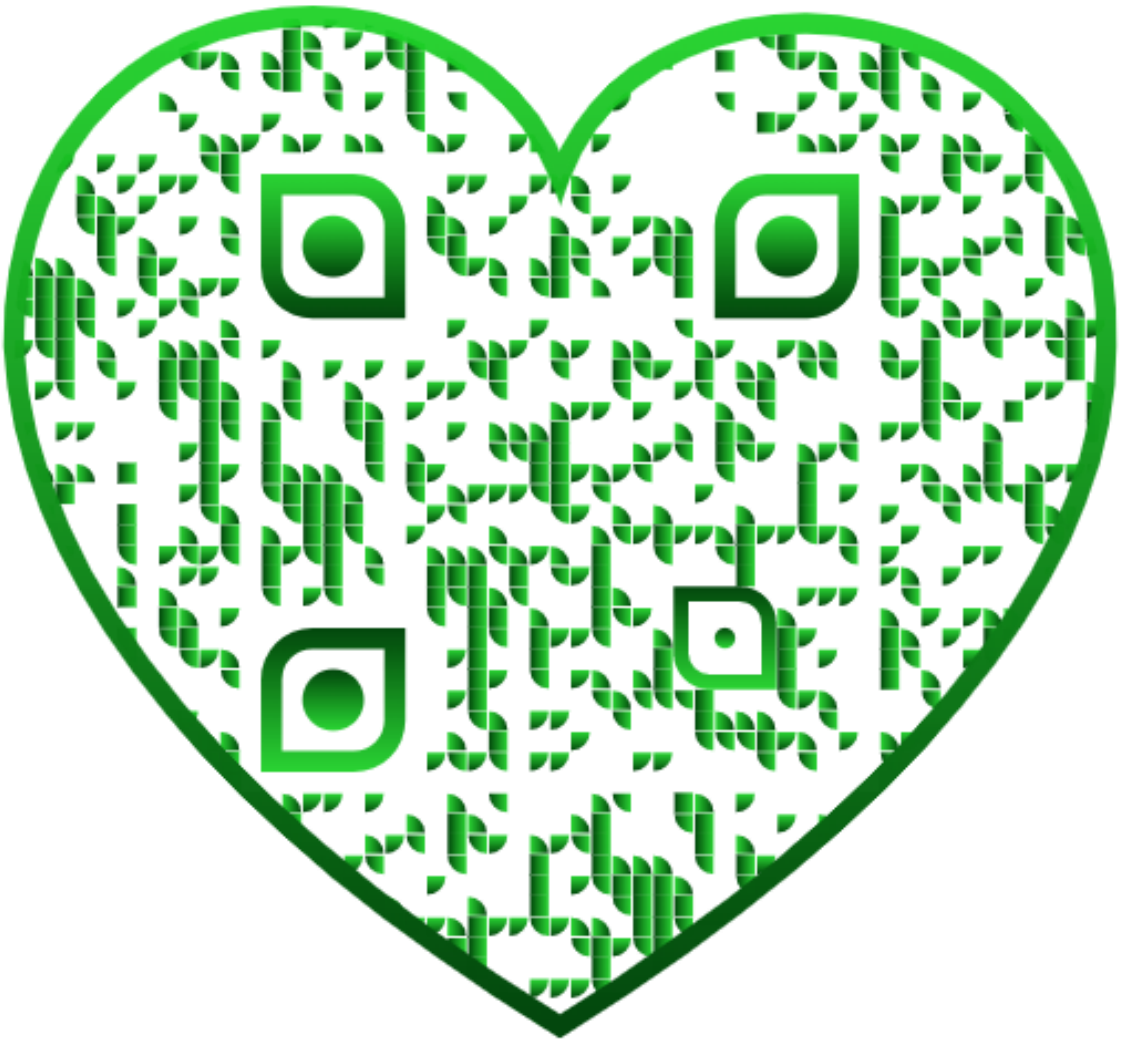

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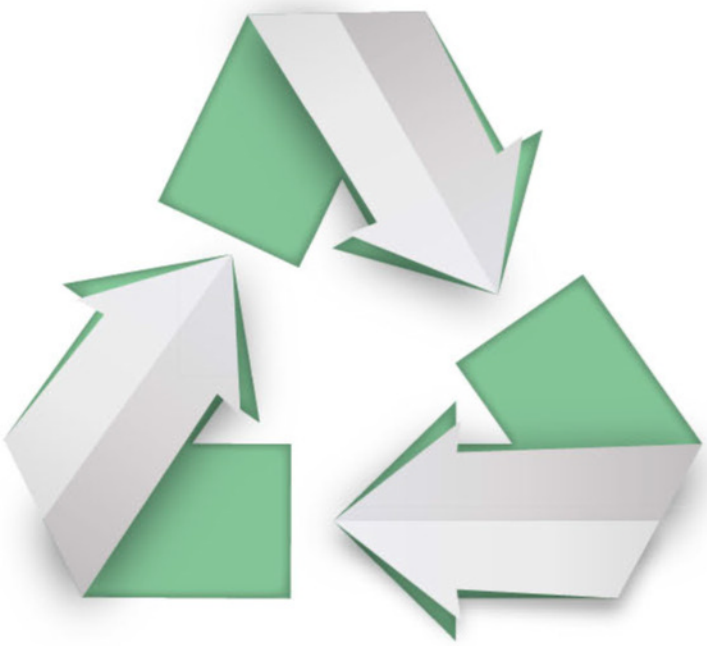

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DUSTIN JACK

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WOODSHED

VOL. 44 | NO. 7 | JULY 2023

NOW, ABOUT THOSE DIMEBAG GUITARS...

SOME OF THE highlights (for me, anyway) of this jam-packed issue are the new Zakk Wylde photos by photographer Dustin Jack — and, in particular, the guitars that appear in every pic. They're not identified in the stories (although they are alluded to on pages 54 and 62), but we just got some late info from the Wylde man himself. And it goes a little something like this (Using the photo below as a guide, the guitars are ID'd from left to right):

>>> **Blue (camo) Washburn Dime Stealth:** Dimebag Darrell had this guitar built when he was with Washburn; he gave it to Zakk at Ozzfest.

>>> **The Dean Dimebag Razorback** was given to Zakk at a NAMM Show by Vinnie Paul and Dean Zelinsky.

>>> **Silver Washburn Dime Stealth:** Dime also had this guitar built for Zakk. It says "Black Label Society" on the back, complete with bullseye and skull. Thanks to Kevin Chiaramonte for the assistance with this and more!

THIS ISSUE'S SPOTIFY PLAYLIST: I guess the big news is that there *is* one, meaning I've managed to create playlists for two issues in a row (This is me patting myself on the back, BTW). To track it down, head to Spotify and search for "2023.07 Guitar World." Enjoy!

CORRECTIONS: In our May 2023 Tune-Ups section, we referred to the Melvins' new album, *Bad Mood Rising*, as *Bad Moon Rising*. Also in the Tune-Ups, we called Pat Finnerty "Pete" Finnerty in his photo caption. We apologize for the errors. Onward and upward!

— Damian Fanelli

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An (awesome) issue with the Pedal Issue

Every month I make my ritual trip to the mailbox to grab *Guitar World*. The first section I read, no matter who is on the cover, is Soundcheck. I love checking out new gear, especially pedals. Just the other day I was dreaming of a *Guitar World* issue that was just 100 pages of Soundcheck. I was delighted to peer in my mailbox and see the Pedal Issue [*May 2023*]. I hope to see more pedal and gear-based feature articles and issues. Oh, yeah — my issue with the issue? I wish it were 10 times longer!

— Dan Newman

A massive thank-you to all involved in creating the wholly exceptional Pedal Issue of *Guitar World*. Even though I've been playing guitar for 30 years, the use of pedals is something I have always found intimidating and overwhelming, hence my sound relying on the simple opportunities afforded by my amp's own effects settings. But what this 14-page feature has done for me is to wonderfully demystify and actually simplify the concept of pedals; it's inspired me to shake off my nervousness and take the plunge! Again, massive thanks!

— Craig Isherwood, Lancashire, England United Kingdom

Chris Hayes is back in the news

I was pleasantly surprised to see the article about Chris Hayes in the May issue. I've been a fan of Huey Lewis and the News since their first album, and I used to see them in clubs like the Keystone Palo Alto (capacity roughly 150). It was great to see Chris and the boys move from clubs to stadiums as their popularity increased, and I'm happy to see Chris is doing well and enjoying the fruits of the band's success.

— Paul Naas

My first thought when I saw there was an interview with Chris Hayes from Huey Lewis and the News was *Yes!* I've been waiting for this interview forever! Chris never got the recognition he should have, but he has a lot of respect in the guitar community. I mean, how many other solos from Eighties pop tunes are as memorable (soulful, original, not cheesy, etc.) as his? Even those who don't know him by name recognize that his work was special. People forget, but Huey Lewis and the News were huge during the Eighties, right up there with Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, etc. — especially for a kid who grew up in the Bay Area. What's cool is that they stayed true to themselves and branched out on the albums that followed their hugely successful *Sports*. Thank you, *GW*, for recognizing Chris and HLN's contribution to music.

— Bill L.

Well, it finally happened — [*the thing*] I've been waiting for — a great story on one of my favorite guitarists, Chris Hayes. Well done, Joe Bosso! I always liked Chris' tone, and yes he is underrated — but not by guitarists like me and the people who listen to his great phrasing. Leave it to *GW* for giving me happiness every month.

— Earl Walker Jr.

Missing the great David Lindley

I think this is as good a time as any to request "Running On Empty" by Jackson Browne. In light of the death of David Lindley, an incredibly underrated guitarist and musician, please look into possibly including a transcription to that amazing song and a detailed account of the song in the Performance Notes section. Thank you very much for your time and for every future issue of *GW*.

— Mark Manzano

Hungry for the Wolf

With the recent success of the *Elvis* movie, I thought it would be very cool to get a new interview with the guitarist for Elvis — James Burton — and throw in some sheet music too! I loved the Wolfgang Van Halen [*January 2023*] interview; some Mammoth WVH sheet music, please.

— Rockin Randall

Spotify playlists would hit the spot

I just cracked open the March issue and read where Mr. Fanelli was considering creating Spotify playlists to accompany the magazine. I just wanted to say that I think this is a terrific idea. I almost always end up going to Spotify to check out artists (new and old) that I read about in *GW*. Having a ready-made playlist would be great!

— Grey Banner

Will we take a spin in the Police Truck?

A Dead Kennedys "Police Truck" tab is needed this year. It is a prime example of beautiful punk guitar, and the lyrics hit hard right now. Thanks for even considering doing this; I know it's not what the majority of your readers want, but it is what they deserve!

— Matt Gardner

More Eric Gales stuff, please!

I'm writing to request more Eric Gales stuff and hopefully transcriptions from the *Crown* album. Also, you guys should do a feature on 49 Winchester. Those boys — Isaac Gibson and Bus Shelton — are putting on a sold-out Fender Tele clinic almost every night. Great players, great tones, great songs. Thanks!

— Shano

Welcome back, Talas; RIP, Phil Naro

Thanks for the update on Talas in the February 2023 issue. In the 1980s I was in the Navy stationed on a submarine out of New London, Connecticut. On one of those rare occasions when we weren't at sea and I wasn't on duty, a buddy suggested I should go see "this great band from Buffalo" who were playing at one of the larger clubs. I went, the band came on, and for the rest of the evening I watched Billy Sheehan play things I didn't think were humanly possible on a bass. Mark Miller was on drums, the guitarist was (I believe) Johnny Angel and Phil Naro was the vocalist. I'm glad to see that three of the members I saw that night reunited to record an album, though I'm saddened to learn that Phil Naro has since passed away.

— Dave Pickering

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READER ART

OF THE MONTH

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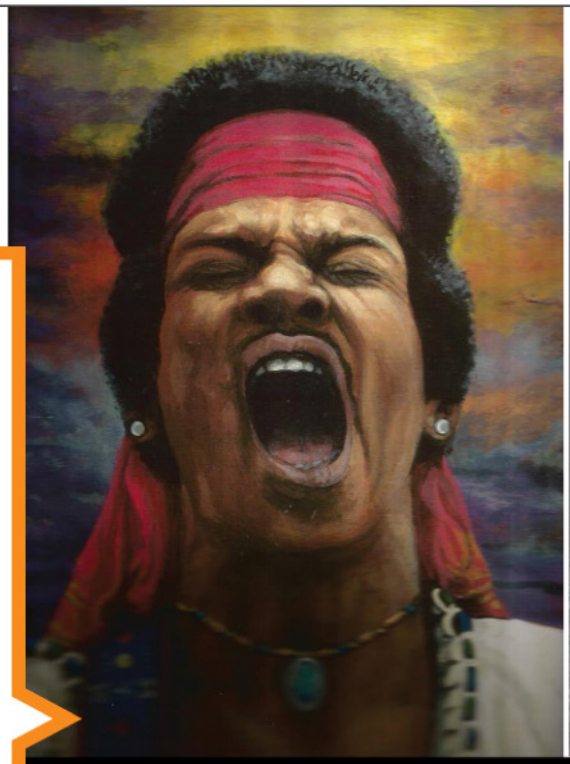

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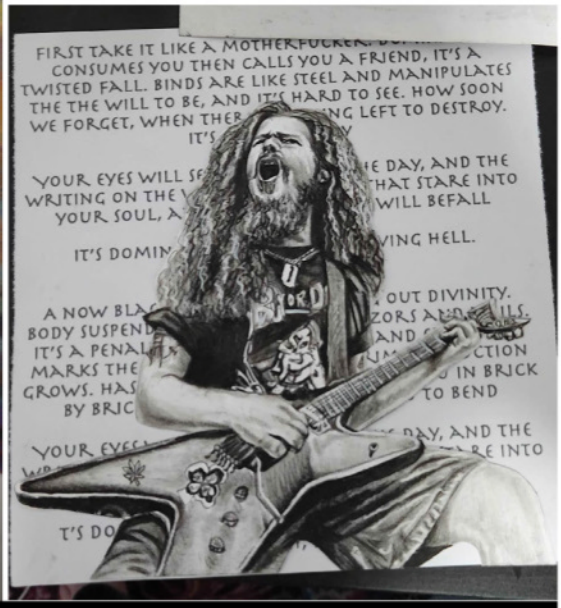

DIMEBAG DARRELL BY JACK SPONSELLER

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

David Nash

AGE: 44
GUITARS: Dean ML, Ibanez RG270
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Pantera "Slaughtered," Slayer "Angel of Death" and originals by my band, Created
GEAR I WANT MOST: Dean Diamond Plate Razorback

Tius Ragan-Johnson

AGE: 27
HOMETOWN: Charlotte, NC
GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Standard, Fender Aerodyne Strat
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Lynyrd Skynyrd, "Workin' for MCA" and "Swamp Music," the Black Crowes "Could I've Been So Blind," Deep Purple "Gettin' Tighter"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Troublemaker Tele, Kauer Banshee, Gibson RD, Gibson Flying V, Charvel Star, Marshall 1987x, Marshall JCM800, EVH 5150

Michael Hund

[GUITARIST FOR DEREK ST. HOLMES]
AGE: 54
HOMETOWN: Buffalo, NY
GUITARS: 1979 25th Anniversary Stratocaster and vintage Fenders and Gibsons
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Anything by Jeff Beck
GEAR I WANT MOST: 1966 Stratocaster slab

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Debashish Bhattacharya with an adapted 1965 Gibson Super 400

PHOTO BY SAYAN DEB SEN

24 Strings Blazing

INDIAN SLIDE GUITAR MASTER DEBASHISH BHATTACHARYA HONORS HIS HERITAGE ON *THE SOUND OF THE SOUL*

By Alan di Perna

WHEN INDIAN SLIDE guitar master Debashish Bhattacharya gives a concert, the venue is usually packed with other guitarists. They come to marvel at his musicianship, which combines the highly disciplined virtuosity of Hindustani classical tradition with the adventurous spirit of a world music trailblazer. He has performed and recorded in a variety of contexts — collaborating with guitar greats like John McLaughlin, Derek Trucks, Henry Kaiser, Bob Brozman, Martin Simpson and African kora master Ballake Sissoko. But his newest recording, *The Sound of the Soul*, is a sublime offering of pure, unadulterated Bhattacharya — a deep dive into the traditions that form the core of his artistry. All based on classical ragas, the album's four tracks feature Bhattacharya on the *chaturangui*, a 24-stringed instrument of his own invention, accompanied only by percussion, either *tabla* or *pakhawaj*. The album pays tribute to one of his key musical mentors, the renowned Indian sarod master Ali Akbar Khan, born a hundred years ago last year.

"Baba Ali Akbar Khan and his father [*the equally revered Allauddin Khan*] were my inspiration from when I was 2," Bhattacharya says. "And they still are."

Training in Indian classical music is based around a system of family lineages, called *gharanas*. Bhattacharya's parents

were both accomplished singers, and he trained in that tradition as well, making his debut on All India Radio at age 4. But from a very early age, he became fascinated with Hawaiian steel guitar, which had first entered India's musical culture as part of the Hawaiian guitar craze of the 1920s-30s. There was no established lineage of Hindustani classical slide guitar playing when Bhattacharya was young. But he found guidance from Akbar Khan, whose own principal instrument, the sarod, bears a certain affinity with slide guitar. A fretless instrument with a metal fingerboard, the sarod, like slide guitar, is capable of producing the plaintive microtonal pitches that are essential to Hindustani classical music.

Through Akbar Khan, Bhattacharya met Brij Bhushan Kabra, the man who had first brought slide guitar from the Indian pop realm into the rarefied world of Indian classical, adapting his Gibson Super 400 archtop with the kind of sympathetic drone and rhythm strings found on many Indian stringed instruments. Bhattacharya studied intensely with Kabra for many years. But, as Kabra was also Ali Akbar Khan's student, Bhattacharya maintained close ties to Khan's *gharana*. In this tradition, the student/teacher bond is as much spiritual and familial as it is musical.

"Ustad Ali Akbar Khan named me 'Devish,'" Bhattacharya says. "Fondly and musically, he gave me what I needed. This album is a humble tribute to his centennial. Khan Sahib's spirit of melody and essence of emotive rasas [*colors/moods*] are all over the album."

Bhattacharya built his first *chaturangui* — a hollowbody, round-hole acoustic guitar modified with additional strings and raised bridge and nut for slide playing — in 1978, when he was just 15. The design grew in sophistication and complexity over the years. Circa 1991-'92, he began building *chaturangui* with hollow necks for added resonance. The design was partially inspired by the Weissenborn hollow-necked Hawaiian slide guitars. "But, as well, you must remember that all our classical Indian instruments are hollow," he says.

"[Guitar] is the best instrument to unify cultures"

The *chaturangui* string arrangement evolved as well. Initially an instrument with five principal strings (tuned D, A, F♯, D, A), it grew to a configuration of six principal strings (D, A, F♯, D, A, D) with two bass drone strings and 14 sympathetic resonating strings on the bass side of the principal strings and two rhythm strings on the treble side.

Bhattacharya's family of custom instruments also includes the *ghandharvi*, basically a 12-string *chaturangui* variant, and the *anandi*, a ukulele/mandolin hybrid which, he says, "has a folksy tone to play any genre of music, including rich Indian melodies, flamenco, blues and any others you name." Most recently, he introduced the *pushpa veena*, a 25-string instrument fashioned from a single piece of teak with a goat skin top. "*Pushpa veena* is a different world," he says. "It's a culmination of cultural soundscapes from different continents. A dream, a lifelong cry and a dedication all together is *pushpa veena*."

But for *The Sound of the Soul*, Bhattacharya employed just two *chaturangui*. "The first track [*was done*] with a solid neck, and all others are on a hollow neck and larger diaphragm," he says. With all those resonant strings at his command, Bhattacharya doesn't necessarily need a traditional drone instrument such as the *tambura*. He can draw from the warm resonance of the guitar to create meditative, droning backdrops, while filling the foreground with the glorious magnificence of raga's seemingly infinite resources. *The Sound of the Soul* is remarkable not only for its dazzling displays of slide guitar virtuosity, but also for the yearning, poetic lyricism that Bhattacharya brings to simple, yet beautiful, melodic passages.

The same level of excellence and beauty is embodied in the exquisitely constructed and ornamented Bhattacharya-designed instruments available on a custom-order basis at debashishcreations.com. Through the impeccable craftsmanship of his instruments and his music, Bhattacharya builds a compelling case for the guitar as the universal instrument.

"It is the best instrument to unify cultures," he says.

INTRODUCING

The Pearl Harts

Love, Chaos (Double Bang)

SOUND This U.K. two-piece features Kirsty Lowery on guitar/vocals and Sara Leigh-Shaw on drums. Sonically, think somewhere between Garbage, Black Sabbath and the Kills with hints of Eighties funk and the odd hip-hop beat. The emphasis is always on big, crunching riffs and economically incisive guitar lines.

KEY TRACK "Like Electric"

Cape Crush

San Souci (Ancient History)

SOUND A Massachusetts-based four-piece with a joyously upbeat blend of emo and power pop, cut through with the spirit of punk — somewhere between the Get Up Kids and Blondie. The guitars of singer Ali Lipman and James Christopher lock into a sinuous groove that deftly counterpoints the soaring melodies of the epic choruses.

KEY TRACK "San Souci"

Poison Ruïn

Harvest (Relapse)

SOUND Rumbling out of Philly, this four-piece mix their post-punk, hardcore influences with a healthy dose of early Clash — but with a harder, grinding edge than the U.K. punk legends. There's a love of NWOBHM and black metal in the mix — the result of which is a uniquely cathartic explosion of energy and emotion.

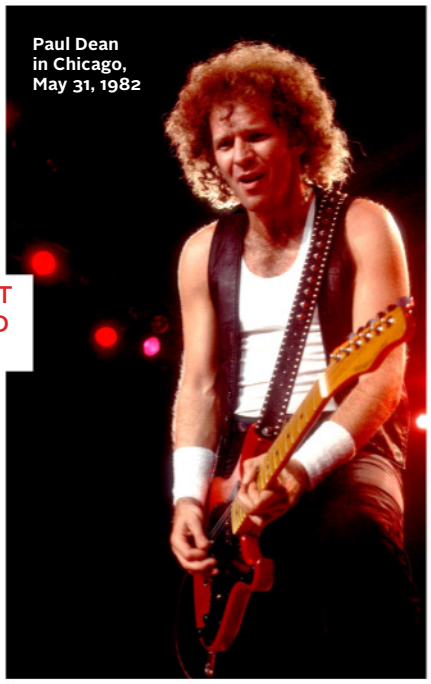
KEY TRACK "Carrion"

— Mark McStea

DEREK BREMNER (HARTS) BRITTANY ROSE QUEEN (CAPE) PROVIDED/PR (POISON)

INQUIRER
PAUL DEAN

THE LONGTIME LOVERBOY GUITARIST ON THE PERILS OF BIKER BOOTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SONGWRITING



Paul Dean in Chicago, May 31, 1982

Q: What was the first song you learned on the guitar?

"I Walk the Line" by Johnny Cash. I learned it instrumentally — especially that Luther Perkins "boom-chicka-boom" rhythm style, which was a big move on my part. In fact, I later used that "boom chicka boom" thing for the "giddy-up" part in the second verse of [*Loverboy's*] "The Kid Is Hot Tonight" and again in the theme for "Working for the Weekend."

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?

This last summer we were out opening for REO Speedwagon and Styx, and I don't know what prompted me to do this, but, in the solo section of "Turn Me Loose" I got down on both knees and I'm wailing away, my head's back almost hitting the floor. Then it came time to stand up, and I'm in these biker boots. As I stood up, I lost my balance! I'm doing this backwards dance across the back of the stage and the crew — and the other bands — are watching me. So much for trying to be cool!

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?

The Neural DSP Quad Cortex. I have a modified 50-watt JCM 900 Marshall that I've had forever (a tech came up with the brilliant idea of putting an electronic power soak across the preamp tube), and that amp is sampled and profiled into the Quad Cortex. I used it all summer long on tour; the best thing about it is that it's the same every night. You're not relying on the power in the building, and you don't have to dial it in at sound check as it's identical every night. And what's so great about that is it's identical not only for you, but identical for all the other guys in the band and the sound guy out front. There's no need for tweaking; it's totally consistent.

Q: Suppose the building is burning down; what one guitar from your collection would you save?

My original Strat that I built in 1974. It started out as a '64 Strat, but I took out the cavity where the whammy sat and filled that in with oak and then filled in the whole body with plastic wood. I built a neck from scratch, which looks like a Tele because I just liked that headstock. It's the guitar I used on "Turn Me Loose," "Working for the Weekend" and "The Kid Is Hot Tonight."

Q: What's the last time you practiced and what did you play?

I just played some new riffs and practiced a couple of scales. Lately though, I've spent most of my time tweaking my guitars. I have a new Godin that was built for me, so I've been tweaking that. I beefed up the block on it, as it has a Floyd, and dialed in the pots to get just the right amount of gain coming out of the guitar so it can talk to my Sennheiser wireless and then to the Quad Cortex and TC Electronic G System, which is my entire chain.

Q: What aspect of guitar would you like to be better at?

I have a style that's pretty much pentatonic all the time, with maybe a few Middle Eastern scales thrown in, but that's kind of where my head's at, and how far I ever got. Though at sound checks, as our keyboard player Doug Johnson is a jazz freak, he always starts off the jam with a jazz thing. So I'll try and catch the odd chord and maybe find a melody that works, but I have no idea what he's doing or the changes he's playing. That's something I want to keep working on. It's slow going, though.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self about the guitar if you magically had the chance?

I'd say start songwriting from day one, as that's where it's all at. There are a million guitar players out there that could smoke me, but as a songwriter, I think I have a unique style. And if you don't have songs, you don't have anything, really. That's where it all comes from. — *Joe Matera*

WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST

POH HOCK

1

Zedd

"Make You Say"

Zedd's songwriting and production work is astounding. The harmonies on this are so satisfying, and the reverb automation on the drop is really catchy yet creative. Everything Zedd does — from sample selections to the automations to the hooks — is always a pleasure to listen to.

2

Sleep Token

"The Summoning"

This song has a really hooky chorus and really heavy parts that complement each other nicely with a dark but energetic vibe. Their new single releases have been amazing.

3

David Maxim Micic

"Itch_ˈnʌθɪŋ_"

The new David Maxim Micic has been on constant rotation in my playlist. His melodies and harmonies are always written in a really tasteful manner, and his riffs are simple yet catchy.

4

Louis Cole

"Planet X"

Louis Cole's latest release, ***Quality Over Opinion***, is an amazing record. Cole's funky drumming on "Planet X" is tight, and hearing the syncopated hits of the harmonized "yeahs" that come in midway through the song is always something I look forward to.

5

Punch Brothers

"My Oh My"

The musicianship by all the musicians in Punch Brothers is a stellar display of mastery on their instruments. Chris Thile is an amazing vocalist and instrumentalist, and the vocal harmonies from all the other members are so cohesive. Their use of dynamics, from extremely quiet to really loud, is something I truly enjoy.

POH HOCK'S NEW EP, *GALLIMAUFRY*, IS OUT NOW.

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES (DEAN) PROVIDED/PR (HOCK)

Ayla Tesler-Mabé

ALTHOUGH SHE'S NOT OPPOSED TO COMPROMISING, THE LUDIC (AND EX-CALPURNIA) GUITARIST IS LOVING EVERY MINUTE OF HER DEBUT SOLO EXPERIMENT

By Gregory Adams

"I'd say I'm experiencing a very important time in my life where I am just truly becoming myself, in a way like never before," Ayla Tesler-Mabé says

AYLA TESLER-MABÉ'S recent single, "Give Me a Sign?" marks the formal solo debut by the Vancouver-based guitarist, formerly with indie-rock outfit Calpurnia and now one third of soul-jazz trio Ludic. This time around, it's all Ayla, all the way, with Tesler-Mabé self-producing the lush, effects-rippled R&B ballad, as well as shouldering all the bass, drum, synth, vocal and guitar duties. Though on the one hand "Give Me a Sign?" is the by-product of an artist cutting loose on her own, its glitterball guitar leads are more nuanced than noodly

"As much as I love and appreciate a wailing guitar solo, unless it's in a live setting, I'm not so sure I want to hear a purely improvisational solo that doesn't have some sense of hookiness to it," Tesler-Mabé says, connecting this to her sleek, octaver-dialing vibrato on the track. "My favorite solos are the ones that are singable."

That earworm quality naturally extends past Tesler-Mabé's soloing, and now transcends her usual six-string approach. Tesler-Mabé began as a bassist and admits she's been leaning harder into her four-string these days, so the hard-popped groove on second single "Keep My Mind Off the News" is a return to form, of sorts. She boomed out the swaggering, envelope filter-heavy funk verses with a recently acquired Fender Aerodyne Precision, though switched to an aesthetically deadened Geddy Lee Jazz model for the mid-section's Latin rhythm breakdown ("It's a great bass — I've just never changed the strings"). Back on six strings, upcoming strutter "Haven't Seen Much of U Lately!" showcases rich chord inversions informed by years of studying Steely Dan and Stevie Wonder, and a waterfall-fluid backend run.

All three singles are part of a broader lead-up to an as-yet-untitled solo EP set for release later this year. And while Tesler-Mabé still loves the collaborative spirit behind her past-and-present group endeavors (Ludic are likewise working on new music), she notes that there's a different kind of pride coursing through tunes where "every single note is something I understand and believe in."

"Unless it's in a live setting, I'm not so sure I want to hear a purely improvisational solo that doesn't have some sense of hookiness to it"

"I'd say I'm experiencing a very important time in my life where I am just truly becoming myself, in a way like never before," Tesler-Mabé says. "It felt essential to be able to do something where I didn't have to compromise. Compromising is beautiful, and I feel like I always try my best to compromise [*in a group scenario*], but it is also very liberating to not have to do that."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS/BASSES** 1966 Fender Coronado II, 1956 Gretsch Jet Firebird, 1967 Gretsch Double Anniversary, Fender Ultra Stratocaster, Fender Duo-Sonic HS, Squier Cabronita Baritone Telecaster, D'Angelico Deluxe DC, Music Man Mariposa, Fender Aerodyne Precision Bass, Fender Geddy Lee Signature Jazz Bass
- **AMPS** 1973 Fender Twin Reverb, 1968 Fender Super Reverb, 1963 Vox AC30
- **EFFECTS** Line 6 Helix, Fender Marine Layer Reverb, Electro-Harmonix Micro Q-Tron, LPD Sixty8 Deluxe, Electro-Harmonix POG 2, MXR Phase 90, Diamond CPR-1 Compressor, Boss DD-7 Digital Delay

RAUNIE MAE

Jesus Piece guitarists David Updike [*left*] and John Distefano

Jesus Piece

NOT EVEN A STUDIO FLOOD (AND OTHER MYSTERIOUS CHALLENGES) CAN STOP THIS PHILLY METALCORE QUINTET

By Gregory Adams

AS FAR AS omens go, finding out about a studio flood the weekend before you're supposed to make your new album seems like a bad one. That's the unlikely predicament Philadelphia's Jesus Piece found themselves in ahead of recording their sophomore full-length, *...So Unknown*, when a burst pipe at Belleville, New Jersey's The Machine Shop forced producer Randy Leboeuf to frantically clear gear out of his lower-floor control room to avoid some serious water damage.

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Jim Root Signature Strat, Fender Jim Root Signature Jazzmaster (Distefano); Gibson Les Paul Classic (Updike)
- **AMPS** EVH 5150 III 50W (both)
- **EFFECTS** Arena Reverb, Fulltone OCD, MXR Phase 90, Whammy Ricochet, Neo Clone (Distefano); Boss NS-2, TC Electronic PolyTune, Neural DSP Quad Cortex (booster, transparent overdrive, two pitch shifters, stereo chorus, modulated reverb)

"It was terrible timing," Jesus Piece guitarist John Distefano recalls of the plumbing disaster. Leboeuf was nevertheless quick on his feet to keep the sessions on-pace, ultimately setting the metallic hardcore quintet up in The Machine Shop's upstairs drum room. "Luckily there was a studio already built up there, otherwise I think we would have been screwed. We would have had to wait for him to totally rebuild."

Since forming Jesus Piece in 2015, Distefano and co-guitarist David Updike have laid noisily chaotic riffplay above a brutal bed of breakdowns and blast beats. Despite a brief d-beat on first single "An Offering to the Night," *...So Unknown* is a more groove-centered panoply of death metal trilling ("Fear of Failure"), graveyard swings ("Profane") and bounce-heavy passages driven by a series of jarringly dissonant augmented fourths.

"We're trying to get out of using straight-up power chords all the time, because that can get pretty boring," Distefano says, with Updike adding of Jesus Piece's attraction to panic-inducing chords, "It's that uneasy feeling. I want people to have an ugly feeling listening to our stuff — [*our music's*] a little uncomfortable!"

While both musicians deliver down-tuned guitar damage on stage, Distefano was tasked with riffing most of *...So Unknown* out in the studio on an EverTuned Jim Root Strat set in B standard. "He has a tighter wrist than mine," Updike says, noting how he instead focused on the record's bass work, assisted by the fuzz-forward attack of a borrowed Fowl Sounds The Lifer pedal.

The Machine Shop has since relocated to a barn setting out in Austin, making *...So Unknown* the final full-length to have been recorded at the East Coast facility. Despite that burst pipe, the sessions were hardly a wash. Instead, they formed a firm and furious knockout blow from Jesus Piece. "Whatever spiritual nature or god there is [*out there*] did not want us to have this record. Every step of this was a fight for us," Updike says, his bandmate countering proudly, "We hit so many barriers [*while making*] this record, but we got through it."

"Whatever spiritual nature or god there is [out there] did not want us to have this record. Every step of this was a fight for us"

DEREK RATHBUN

[*from left*] Bruce Kulick (in full-on Kiss mode) in New York City in 1985; *Back to School* star Rodney Dangerfield in Beverly Hills in 1987; Michael Bolton in Los Angeles in 1988

JOHN KISCH ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (KULICK) GEORGE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES (DANGERFIELD) RON GALELLA/RON GALELLA COLLECTION VIA GETTY IMAGES (BOLTON)

Bruce Kulick goes *Back to School*

IN 1985, THE FUTURE KISS GUITARIST TEAMED UP WITH MICHAEL BOLTON — YES, *THAT* MICHAEL BOLTON — FOR SOME HARD-ROCKING TUNES, ONE OF WHICH WOUND UP IN RODNEY DANGERFIELD'S (AWESOME) 1986 COMEDY

By Andrew Daly

BEFORE HE WAS a member of Kiss, Bruce Kulick was a nomad, logging miles with Meat Loaf, Blackjack and the Good Rats, even appearing in the studio with Billy Squier. But the most interesting of all his exploits may be his work with blue-eyed soul crooner Michael Bolton.

Of course, Kulick had worked with Bolton before in the aforementioned Blackjack before the latter jettisoned himself for pop stardom. And while most of Bolton's exploits are more catered toward mellow nights spent at Grandma's, one album remains an outlier, 1985's *Everybody's Crazy*.

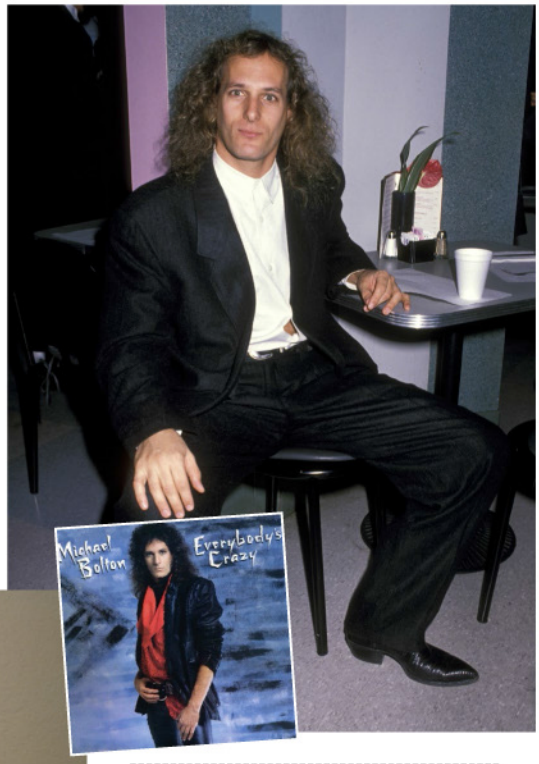
"I kept in touch with Michael after Blackjack," Kulick says. "But Michael was not a rock artist anymore; he was this big, Grammy-winning pop guy now. This was music only your mother could love. [*Laughs*] But apparently, Michael was encouraged by his producer, Neil Kernon, to try and get in on glam metal and make a rock album, and they hired me to play some guitars down at Electric Lady Studios."

As any good disciple of Hendrix should, Kulick came to the studio armed with a period-correct Super Strat, ready to dive bomb his way to infamy. All told, Kulick appeared on eight of *Everybody's Crazy's* nine tracks (Kevin Dukes played on "Desperate Heart"), but the molten lava licks scattered across the title track turned the heat up most.

"Oh, man, we overdubbed the guitars like crazy," Kulick says. "We double, triple and quadruple overdubbed everything. Neil was fixated on getting that big Mutt Lange sound, and I can't tell you how many times he yelled out, 'Bruce, tune that guitar!' So I'd be tuning it all over again and then praying it sounded right. And then the rhythm guitars — forget it. I wouldn't be surprised if that track had four to six rhythm overdubs alone. It was — no pun intended — crazy!"

Of course, if you're not a fan of Michael Bolton or missed the album entirely, no bother; there was at least one other way you might have heard "Everybody's Crazy" — the 1986 Rodney Dangerfield joint, *Back to School*.

"That was hilarious," Kulick says. "We went to the movie premier, and I remember sitting next to Michael, who was very excited. We're watching the movie and laughing, and then suddenly there's the song in the movie. And remember — Michael was elated to have 'Everybody's Crazy' in the movie, but when it started playing, they picked it up during my guitar solo. I could see the look on Michael's face — he was so disappointed. But I loved it! I'm sitting there smiling, loving every minute of my solo being featured in a Rodney Dangerfield movie. I don't think about it often, but it makes me smile whenever I do."



"Michael was elated to have a song in the movie, but when it started, they picked it up during my solo. I could see the look on his face — he was so disappointed"

If nothing else, *Everybody's Crazy* served as foreshadowing for Kulick, as just a few short months later, he got the call to join Kiss (who found themselves in full-on hair metal mode). Soon, the New York native was summoned to the studio to sub for an ailing Mark St. John on *Animalize* and then was officially indoctrinated on the road. But had Bolton's foray into hair metal succeeded, might Kulick have stuck with him instead?

"Probably not," he says. "I was loyal to Michael after Blackjack ended, and Billy Squier was even pretty upset that I chose Michael over him in the early Eighties. But joining Kiss was a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and when Paul Stanley asked me, there was no doubt I'd give it a shot. But 'Everybody's Crazy' was a fun song, and I had a great time doing it. But it didn't do what it should have commercially. It caused Michael to re-examine his career and reinvent himself. But it's a great anthem."

Drain

TALK ABOUT LIVING PROOF THAT GUITAR IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE RUMBLING WORLD OF HARDCORE

By Gregory Adams

BACK BEFORE CODY Chavez was expertly quaking through the micro-dives and cement-cracking hardcore riffage of his Drain outfit's new *Living Proof* album, he was a teenage guitarist devouring Metallica tabs in Salinas, California. While he's now squiggling out squeals galore on his arsenal of Jackson Dinkys, he was much more Hetfield than Hammett in his youth, going so far as to eschew lead aesthetics entirely.

"I would always make excuses like, 'Oh, rhythm playing is better; Hetfield, all he does is riffs; I don't need solos,'" Chavez says. "But as I got older [*I realized*] if I'm going to be a guitarist, I have to actually work the fretboard. I'm glad I made that decision when I was younger. Now that's my favorite thing to do — to play leads."

On 2020's *California Cursed*, Chavez subtly peppered lead accents into Drain's riffs-first approach while using a fixed-bridge Soloist. You can credit the max-velocity runs and note-warping on *Living Proof*'s "Weight of the World" solo — Chavez's biggest lead yet — to the buttery neck and bend-it-'til-you-break-it floating system of the Dinky. "This time I had the Floyd, [*so*] I have a lot of whammy bar tricks, a lot of mini-solos and little runs," Chavez says of the added flair.

Perhaps even more impressively, Chavez managed to mangle out the brute-force rhythms of the record's "Watch You Burn" while using an LTD model that vocalist Sammy Ciaramitaro accidentally backed over on their way to the studio. The guitar had been propped up against a rental car as the pair were packing things into the trunk, Chavez experiencing a gut-wrenching shock when they saw the instrument wedged beneath the vehicle a moment later. Miraculously, the LTD escaped with minimal body damage (Chavez confirms: "The pots were a little smashed, but the volume was still [*functional*].")

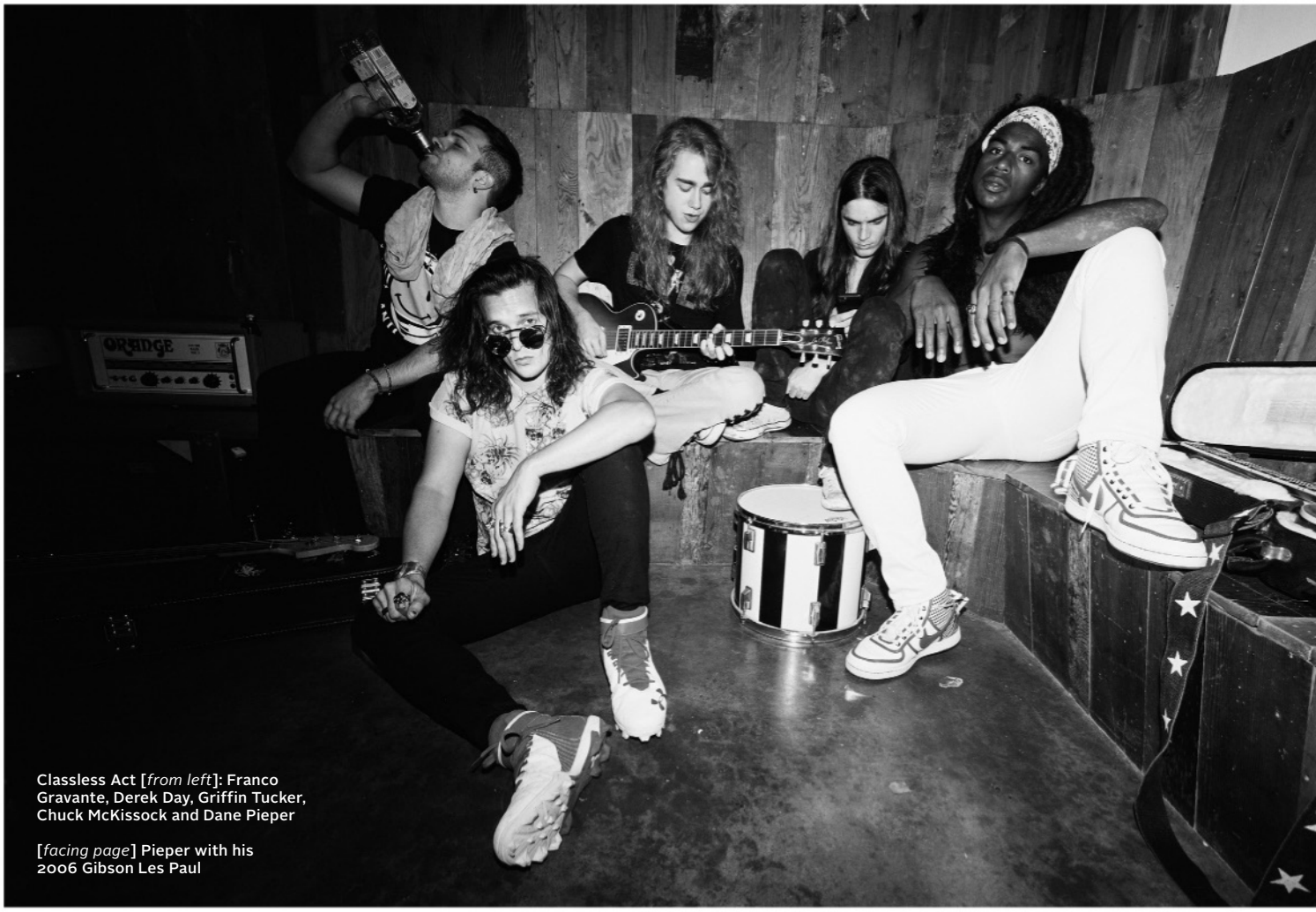
While *Living Proof* thrives on tremolo-intensive thrash-mosh and chunked-up grooves, it also sports some serious sonic wild cards. "Intermission" is a mid-album breather built around programmed trap rhythms (Chavez has been beatmaking since high school) and guest bars from rapper Shakewell; later, Ciaramitaro abandons neck-bulging hardcore howls for a melodic croon during Drain's faithful take of California punk vets Descendents' romantic "Good Good Things." Though Drain contemplated going dummy on the cover with their usual mania, the band ultimately chose to play it straight. Chavez adds, "We could've thrashed it up or thrown a breakdown in there, but I think it's cool we paid complete homage to the Descendents by doing it in the way they did it... or at least we tried to!"

Cody Chavez with his Jackson X Series Kelly

GAVIN REESE MORTENSEN

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Two white Jackson MJ Series Dinkys and a red Jackson X Series Kelly
- **AMPS** Randall RG100 Solid State
- **EFFECTS** Boss GE-7 Graphic Equalizer, MXR Analog Chorus and Delay



Classless Act [*from left*]: Franco Gravante, Derek Day, Griffin Tucker, Chuck McKissock and Dane Pieper

[*facing page*] Pieper with his 2006 Gibson Les Paul

TRAVIS SHINN (BAND) WILL WILLIAM/COURTESY OF DANE PIEPER (PIEPER)

The Classless of '23

CLASSLESS ACT GUITARIST DANE PIEPER CHRONICLES THE RISE OF A ROCK 'N' ROLL JUGGERNAUT

By Andrew Daly

AS SOME OF the freshest faces among the ranks of the New Wave of Classic Rock, Classless Act have spent most of the last 12 months barnstorming stages across the country. Between dropping their debut, *Welcome to the Show*, and hopping on tour with Joan Jett, Poison, Mötley Crüe and Def Leppard as a supporting act for 2022's Stadium Tour, yeah, you could say a lot has changed for Classless Act.

But at the band's crux, a high-energy passion for all things rock 'n' roll remains. The band's rhythm/lead guitarist, Dane Pieper, played a considerable role. With a tried-and-true combination of class Gibson guitars plugged into a Marshall stack, Pieper is a throwback with a bullet. In an age where many of the old guard have proclaimed "rock is dead," Pieper's kick-flipping nature is a not-so-subtle reminder that perhaps there's life left in the genre yet.

During a break from the road, Pieper dialed in with *Guitar World* to dig into his philosophy on life, family and, of course, guitar.

What inspired you to pick up the guitar?

My parents always had music in the house and the car. It rubbed off on me. They weren't musicians but definitely loved the art of music. It brought so much joy to our family, and I have many memories associated with certain rock songs. The more I listened, the more I thought, "Hey, I want to do that when I'm older."

How did being adopted shape your outlook on life and music?

I have two families! What's better than that? Also two completely separate family histories. I learned so much about myself since reconnecting with my birth family. For example, I found out I have royal Hawaiian blood in me! One of my ancestors was a mistress for King Kamehameha and had a child in my family line. Understanding that I was adopted made me realize early on that there isn't a "normal" in life, and that's okay. My awareness and knowledge that being adopted isn't "conventional" showed me that everyone has stories. Wrapped in those stories are triumphs and defeats and overall personality. It's those little intricacies in life that make everyone truly special. This openness taught me to keep my mind open to music and things beyond. Whatever is presented may not be through a medium you understand, but it's still an expression of human experiences. There are so many points of view to tell through art and so many individual experiences that you can understand.

"We want to capture the world's attention and keep working hard 'til we do"

Did any single album influence you the most growing up?

Three albums immediately came to mind. *Van Halen* made me fall in love with riffs. The magnetic energy and fun atmosphere all over that album got me hooked. That's something I want to capture in my music. Secondly, AC/DC's *Highway to Hell* awakened the little guitar fire in me. The attitude and force of nature captured on that album are remarkable. You can't listen to *Highway to Hell* and not feel like a badass. Third, *Appetite for Destruction* by Guns N' Roses was a significant influence. The attitude and writing in that album completely captured me. Growing up, I watched a lot of footage of GNR performing at various venues. Those videos got me jumping on my bed and pretending I was on stage with them as a kid. I'm a knuckles-to-the-pavement type of person, so those albums kickstarted my obsession with becoming a great musician and wanting to write music.

Would you describe your style as visceral or more thought-out?

I'm definitely a visceral player. Rock 'n' roll isn't about the technical; it's about the attitude. Simply put, the "how" vs. the "what" makes rock music special for me. I'm very much a performer and showman at heart. Just as iconic rock bands perform legendary concerts that everyone remembers, I strive to put on that same energy. I consider myself a visceral player because I love spontaneity and the present moment. Allowing yourself to live in the now makes your body the true vehicle for whatever you want to express. There aren't any barriers or hesitation. It's your unapologetic self that shines through, and that's the beauty of it.

What does your setup look like in terms of guitars, amps and pedals?

The main guitars I use are my semi-hollow-body Gibson ES-335 and a 2006 Gibson Les Paul Studio Standard. Those are my main guitars simply because I love their sound. I'm not overly technical when it comes to guitar; it's about sound and feel for me. If they can rock 'n' roll, then I'm good. And there is nothing more rock 'n' roll than a Gibson plugged into a Marshall JCM 900. I also have a Fender Telecaster, but that's more of a backup to my Gibsons. Again, I keep it simple, just a little reverb and delay; that's all you need to make things shine.

What has changed the most for you over the last 12 months?

The past 12 months were truly transformative. To use an analogy, it's like this beautiful sculpture is hidden in this block of stone, and last year was full of sculpting and chipping away at it. In just last year, we released our debut album and toured for a total of seven months. We played in all types of venues, from bars, clubs and stadiums — everywhere and anywhere from 50 people in bars in L.A. to 25,000 in stadiums nationwide. I needed a tour journal to keep track of all of it. We traveled 50,000-plus miles last year, so it's safe to say I saw a lot of the country. Touring allows you to come across so many different walks of life that you may not usually come across. With the scale of a national tour, you come across virtually every type of American. All of that broadens your scope of understanding and compassion. I grew up and lived by the coast in Southern California, so I never really heard a New York accent or had been in a small town in the Midwest. Overall, it was a surreal year; I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Are Classless Act working on a follow-up to their debut?

Last year, we supported our debut album, *Welcome to the Show*, during the Stadium Tour, and we're incredibly proud of that record. Of course, we recently released our *Acoustic EP*, and recently, we covered David Bowie's "All the Young Dudes" and "Starman." So, we've always got new things happening. We have some cool collaborations in the works — as we did with the first record — and we're getting ready to announce those soon. I can't say much other than, if you like what we did on the first album, stay tuned because there's a whole lot more where that came from.

What's next for you?

Playing guitar, writing music and kicking more butt. We're in between tours, so I've also been working and staying productive. I've been picking up part-time jobs along the way. Most recently, I've been working as a ninja instructor for little kids and a running coach for a women's recovery shelter nearby. Last year was incredible, and I'm working hard to keep that train going. Life, to me, is all about maintaining that upward trajectory. I've honed in on my guitar skills and performance skills; the rest of Classless Act is the same. We want to capture the world's attention and keep working hard 'til we do.

Ally Venable

BESIDES A NEW STUDIO, NEW BAND AND NEW MINDSET, THIS YOUNG TEXAN'S LATEST ALBUM BENEFITS FROM SOME PRETTY INCREDIBLE GUEST APPEARANCES BY BUDDY GUY AND JOE BONAMASSA

By Andrew Daly

"Joe [*Bonamassa*] is a master and has this way of creating the perfect solo," Ally Venable says. "Be it his grip or how he expresses himself, no one finds ways to relate to others through the guitar quite like him"

"I'VE SAID IT before, but I'm just a girl with a guitar," says young blues-rock songstress Ally Venable. "But that doesn't mean I haven't grown — I have — and I think this album shows that. This is my most evolved form, doing what I love."

Since emerging from Kilgore, Texas, at 14, Ally Venable, aka "Texas Honey," has made a name for herself amid a swarming blues circuit. Now 10 years after the release of Venable's debut EP, *Wise Man*, it's hard to believe she's only 23. Moreover, as she prepares to release her fifth record, *Real Gone*, Venable seems more like a weathered veteran than a fresh-faced kid.

"Something about this album felt different," she says. "It's more than just my songwriting; it was the entire experience of recording it. These last couple of years have been about growth, and I brought new experiences to the studio. I worked with a new group of musicians, recorded in Nashville and had many new people around me. It was a lot of change, but I embraced it with open arms. That newness ripped me from my comfort zone and allowed me to create something beautiful."

Change, growth and all things new — okay, and maybe making some old appear new — are the linchpins of *Real Gone*. But of all the shiny new things featured on Venable's latest, the most shimmering of all is Buddy Guy's presence on Venable's sinfully cut "Texas Louisiana."

"It was a huge honor to even be around Buddy," Venable says. "He's one, if not *the* person, whose music I look to for inspiration. When I started playing guitar, God, few players impacted me the way Buddy did. He taught me so much about blues music, what it is, where it comes from and how to channel it. Being able to experience that firsthand is a dream come true. I feel like I bonded with him, which is why I called the song 'Texas Louisiana.' I wanted to represent where we both come from and show the merging of those worlds through music."

"It was a huge honor to even be around Buddy Guy"

Guy wasn't the only titan of the blues to stop by the studio to log hours for *Real Gone*, though, as Joe Bonamassa made his towering presence known on the album's fourth track, "Broken and Blue."

"Having Joe in the studio was yet another education," Venable says. "I feel at home and most comfortable with a guitar in my hands, which Joe and I have in common. Joe is a master and has this way of creating the perfect solo. Be it his grip or how he expresses himself, no one finds ways to relate to others through the guitar quite like him."

With each successive album, Venable has taken giant steps to further her foothold within the blues. If *Real Gone* is any indication, the red-haired firecracker is turning up the heat again, putting her scene mates on notice — with a bullet — that she's undoubtedly here to stay.

"Listening back to this album, I know for sure that I'm not who I used to be," Venable says. "You grow up, and you move on, and then one day, you realize you've left certain things behind. I've become a different person, and that's an evolution I've not completed yet. *Real Gone* reflects the past but also who I am now. That's what's most meaningful to me — that I could open myself up and show the world who I am. I've never entirely done that before, but I was able to here."

TINO SIELAND

Chris Duarte

THE TEXAS BLUES PRO'S LATEST EFFORT IS A STUDY IN RAW, IN-THE-MOMENT FIREWORKS. "THERE WAS NO OVERTHINKING," HE SAYS

By Mark McStea

CHRIS DUARTE BROKE through way back in 1994, when his second album, *Texas Sugar/Strat Magik*, sold more than 100,000 copies, serving notice of a new blues guitar hero in town. The release of *Ain't Giving Up*, his 15th album, sees him reunited with *Texas Sugar* producer Dennis Herring to deliver one of the strongest records in his catalog.

"I'd forgotten about the way Dennis liked to record. He tapes everything and keeps it all," Duarte says. "When I was doing guitar parts and it came to the solo I'd just play straight off the top of my head, thinking I'd go back and put the actual solos on later. When I went back in to do the vocals, I took my guitar as I thought I'd be putting on some guitar tracks, but Dennis just said they were all done. Everything I recorded on those first sessions is what we used."

Undoubtedly, that was a major factor in the vital, raw sound of the album. "There was no overthinking," he says. "You can start to second guess yourself, whereas when I did the parts I just played everything exactly as I felt it, and it couldn't have turned out better."

"The proof of the benefits of regular playing really shows itself at the end of a tour, when you realize that your playing is on another level from the first dates," Chris Duarte says

"I just played everything exactly as I felt it, and it couldn't have turned out better"

Some of the tracks really push the blues boundaries. "'Come My Way' has a Seventies Univox drum machine and 'Big Fight' sees me try to channel a bit of a Sly Stone vibe. There's a run that I do in the solo that isn't at all precise — 'time and perfection be damned,' you know? John Coltrane is my number one guy in terms of influence for my soloing, and I think there's some of that in my approach on this one."

A signature element in Duarte's playing is his immaculate sense of rhythm and groove. "I'd credit that to the fact that I've always worked real close with a metronome, and when I'm playing with a band, I always try to make a strong connection with the drummer — I particularly like it when they get into cross-rhythms and that kind of stuff. I can really feed off that and almost syncopate my playing against theirs at times. There's nothing wrong with being straight on the beat, but I do always love to play around with the push and pull of timing and rhythmic pulses."

Duarte is an ardent advocate of the joys of practicing. "I *need* to play every day. I sound much better when I practice every day. I have a routine that I've done since the early days, where I'll run major and minor scales, then I'll start working on ideas. The proof of the benefits of regular playing really shows itself at the end of a tour, when you realize that your playing is on another level from the first dates. The guitar gives you back what you put into it — it's that simple."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Xotic Chris Duarte XS-1, Gibson 175 TD, Vestax D'Angelico New Yorker, Epiphone Les Paul in green sparkle
- **AMPS** 1992 Fender Vibro King, Chicago Blues Box (Bassman-type model), red 1973 Marshall 50W head and matching red Marshall 4x12 cab
- **STRINGS** GHS Boomers (.11-.50), tuned down a tone

JIM ARBOGAST

"I like to play rhythms on the higher frets because that's the [*sonic*] range of the violin," Ravenna Hunt-Hendrix says

Liturgy

RAVENNA HUNT-HENDRIX PUTS IT BEST: "I THINK OF LITURGY AS ORCHESTRAL MUSIC CREATED WITH THE TOOLS OF A METAL BAND"

By Jon Wiederhorn

SINCE 2005, LITURGY composer Ravenna Hunt-Hendrix (formerly Hunter Hunt-Hendrix) has released six increasingly extreme albums that have mixed the jagged and tattered arrangements of early Swans, John Zorn's Naked City and Lightning Bolt with the raw ferocity of Norwegian bands such as Darkthrone and Emperor. At the same time, Hunt-Hendrix has imbued her songs with atmospheres and textures that have belied convention and provided nuance to Liturgy's off-kilter creations. Along with live musicians Mario Miron (guitar), Tia Vincent-Clark (bass) and Leo Didkovsky (drums), Liturgy have created showers of icy and molten noise that have been both beautiful and terrifying.

"I think of Liturgy as orchestral music created with the tools of a metal band," says Hunt-Hendrix, who studied classical composition and music theory in college. "I'm very interested in avant-garde classical music, but I'm also interested in 19th-century romanticism, which is what traditional black metal hearkens back to as well."

There's plenty of burning black metal in Liturgy, including demonic-sounding vocals, buzzsaw guitars and chaotic arrangements. Just don't expect Liturgy to shout for the devil. Hunt-Hendrix is a practicing Christian (the band's new album, *93696*, is named after a numeric symbol for Heaven), and she writes from a place of strength and savagery driven by love.

"I think of this new album as having an energy that comes from a divine fire that reflects a new transformative era for civilization"

"I'm far more interested in beauty than in anger and destruction, and I think a lot of Liturgy sounds very pretty compared to a lot of black metal," Hunt-Hendrix says. "But it's obviously super-ferocious and violent, too. I think of this new album as having an energy that comes from a divine fire that reflects a new transformative era for civilization."

Even though *93696* is clearly a black metal album, Liturgy skirt convention by layering their music with choir vocals, free jazz beats, electronic manipulations and wind instruments. Even more significantly, Hunt-Hendrix takes an unusual approach to the ever-present tremolo riffs.

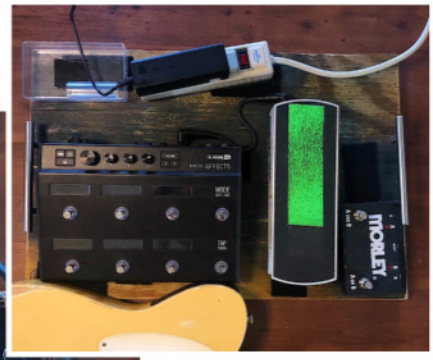
"I always play chords above the 12th fret, which is unusual in black metal," she says. "I like to play rhythms on the higher frets because that's the [*sonic*] range of the violin. I play a lot of D-shaped chords around the 20th fret and let the bottom of the guitar ring out while I play these suspended notes that remind me of a symphony."

Between Hunt-Hendrix's rebellious nature, spirituality and unique esthetic, she has garnered a highly unusual following that includes indie hipsters, open-minded black metal fans, Satanists and spiritualists. "I don't have a problem with anybody liking it, nor do I particularly want any type of person to like it," she says. "I just want it to be its own thing."

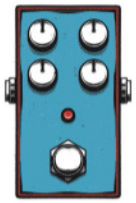
AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Reverend Descent W Baritone, Gibson SG
- **AMPS** Sovtek Mig 50, Orange Rockerverb MKIII, Hiwatt
- **AMPS** Ernie Ball

LARRY NIEHUES



"The Line 6 HX Effects [*above left*] turned out to be much easier than putting a whole other board together just for playing slide," says Grayson Stewart [*below*]



MY PEDALBOARD
GRAYSON STEWART

WHAT THE NORMA JEAN GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

"I DON'T WANT to carry around a spaceship-sized board, so I try to keep it simple. The first spot goes to my Shure GLXD6 wireless — but since it doesn't have an input for using its tuner without the transmitter, I have a TC Electronic PolyTune as a backup. That goes into the DigiTech Drop [*which provides nine polyphonic drop tune settings from one semitone to a full octave*], because we might use four to seven different tunings on any given night.

"The Drop goes into my T-Rex Octavius, which has become Norma Jean's signature-sound pedal. The way it can mix in low and high octaves while also having a built-in boost is very helpful. It adds what I call a "chaos" element. From there, I go straight into the Walrus Audio Iron Horse, which I use for a few key moments where I can crank the pedal and push it to the nastiest extent with a bunch of bonus feedback. In conjunction with the T-Rex, the Iron Horse gives me a doomsday sound by stacking layers of distortion.

"That goes into the Maxon ST-9 Pro+ Super Tube. I like it for the moments when I need a tighter, more razor-sharp-type tone. I usually keep it in Classic mode, with the drive off and the level cranked to 10. I needed a serious noise gate to help wrangle all that stuff in, and the only thing that's been able to do the job is the Fortin Amplification Zuul Noise Gate. Its setting ultimately depends on whether the stage is carpeted or wood and how far I am from the cab, but the Zuul can handle it all.

"Then we head into a Walrus Audio Fathom; it's the perfect amount of reverb without being too much. That goes into a Boss DD-7, which I use on one or two songs. It's a very choppy delay, but it and the Fathom work well together for the more ambient interludes and lower-volume moments.

"The last thing is a Line 6 HX Effects pedal, Ernie Ball volume pedal and Morley ABY switcher/combiner, which is separate from the rest of my stuff. I use it just for slide, running a patch with compressor, delay and octave effects, all of which make the slide slightly fuller sounding. It's a simple setup, and the HX Effects turned out to be much easier than putting a whole other board together just for playing slide."

■ *IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:*
"The T-Rex Octavius impacts Norma Jean the most. It's the only pedal I've found that does what it does. There are a lot of parts in our set that rely on that low-end muddiness."

Wanna see someone's pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWsoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

GRAYSON STEWART (PEDALBOARDS) PROVIDED/PR (STEWART)

QUOTABLE

Q: TRACII GUNS: 12 PLAYERS WHO SHAPED MY SOUND

"These are the players that really did it for me," Tracii Guns says. "I'm not taking anything away from the greats like Vai or Satriani, or George Lynch, who's a sick guitar player, but I think I was too old for them to have an impact on me when I was a teenager."

1. Jimmy Page
2. Tony Iommi
3. Jimi Hendrix
4. David Gilmour
5. Eddie Van Halen
6. Randy Rhoads
7. Gary Moore
8. Jeff Beck
9. Michael Schenker
10. Keith Richards
11. Joe Perry
12. Dimebag Darrell

"I'd venture to say Dimebag was able to take in things that were already there and make them his own with his Randall amp, L-500XL pickup, pointy Dean guitar and his smile. **He'd kick your ass while smiling at you with a guitar.** It's like, Jesus Christ, man. He was one hell of a player, and his whole vibe definitely influenced me."

Q: STEVE HACKETT ON DISCOVERING TWO-HAND TAPPING

"I can't recall the exact moment [*I discovered the technique*], but I remember how it made me feel. **It's probably the guitar-playing equivalent of splitting the atom.** Just to feel that it's possible to be able to do something that, at one time, only keyboard players could do, was exhilarating. And now, for over 50 years, it's been a part of the rock 'n' roll vocabulary. Thinking about it, I first recall doing it in '71 on *Nursery Cryme*. I recall that I struggled to play it in time, but I practiced it live during some solos with Genesis, and that's when other people picked up on it. I didn't realize its significance in the universal sense back then. At the time, I thought it was personal to me and that I was the only person doing that."

— Andrew Daly

From GuitarWorld.com

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES

George Thorogood talks tunings, effects in 2011

Please tell me about those open tunings of yours.
I use open G and open D. If I go any higher, I usually put a clamp [*capo*] on it. I don't like doing that. Tuning it down gives you a thicker, fuller sound. That's what Jimi Hendrix did. He tuned it down half a step, and so he got that real fat sound, but it's hard to keep it in tune that way. Especially the way Hendrix bent the notes. But I prefer tuning down, plus I have a low voice, so it worked better for me when I was starting. Bonnie Raitt plays an open A, John Hammond plays an A and E, and he breaks a lot of strings. The tension is tight. So I tune it down. Sometimes it'll go a little flat, a little out of tune, but we have backup guitars to change with. But those are my tunings.

What effects did you use on "Bad to the Bone," which I actually heard on a TV commercial this morning?
I had no effects. The effects are all in my hands. Most of the greats, that's how they played. That's how they get the effects. Hendrix only used volume. Elvin Bishop and B.B. King, they alter things just with their hands. I always thought that was very cool. They don't rely on a lot of phonies or gimmicks, just mechanics.

— Damian Fanelli

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

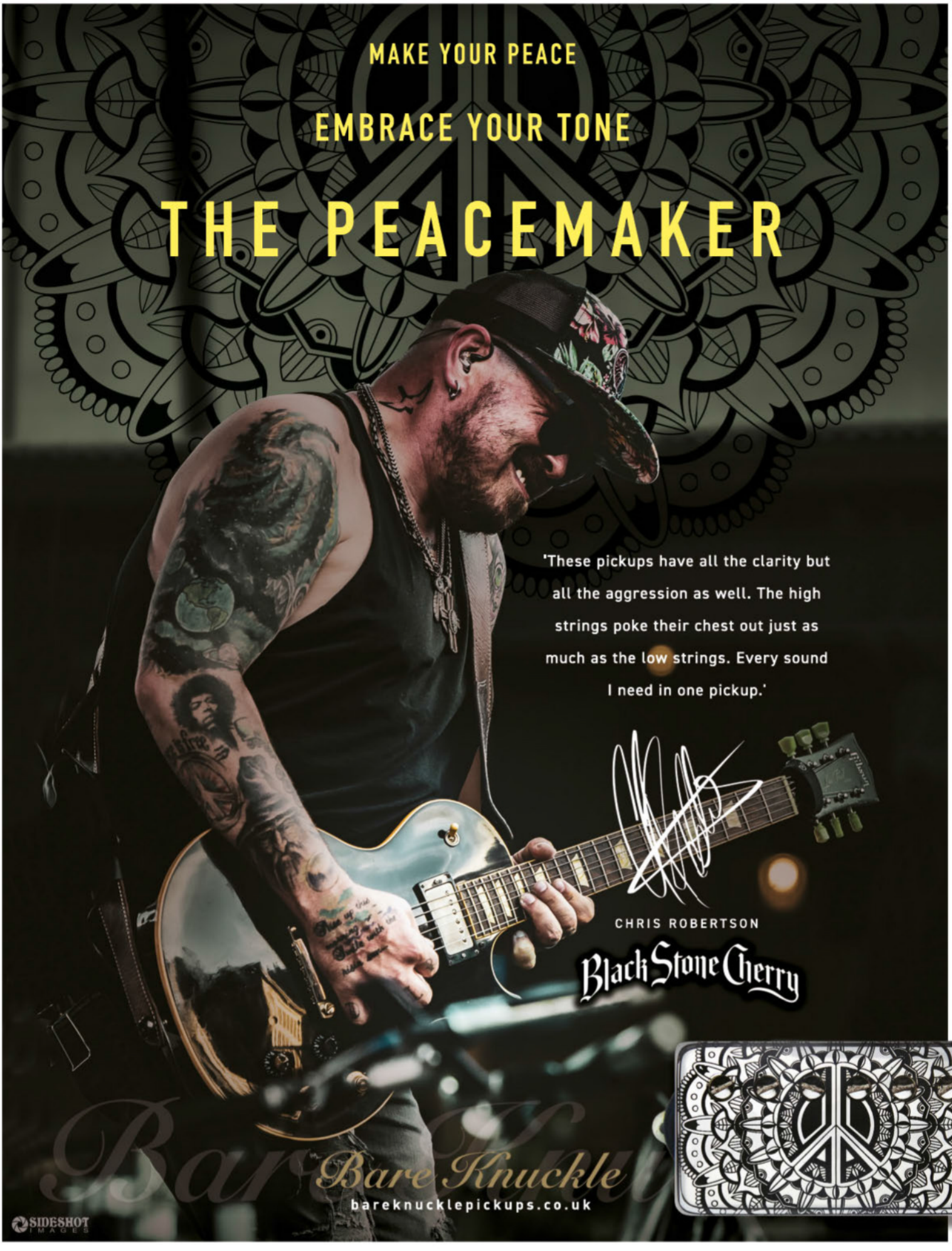
Indiana-born **Wes Montgomery** (1923-1968) — playing his Gibson L-5 — jams with his band at ABC-TV Studios in London on the set of a show called *Tempo*. Montgomery's episode, which is called "Boss Guitar: The Art of Wes Montgomery," aired March 27, 1965. Before Montgomery peformed, fellow guest Ronnie Scott — popular U.K. jazz musician and co-founder of Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in London — called Montgomery "one of the greatest — if not *the* greatest jazz guitarist in the world." You can check out the full episode on YouTube. *— DF*

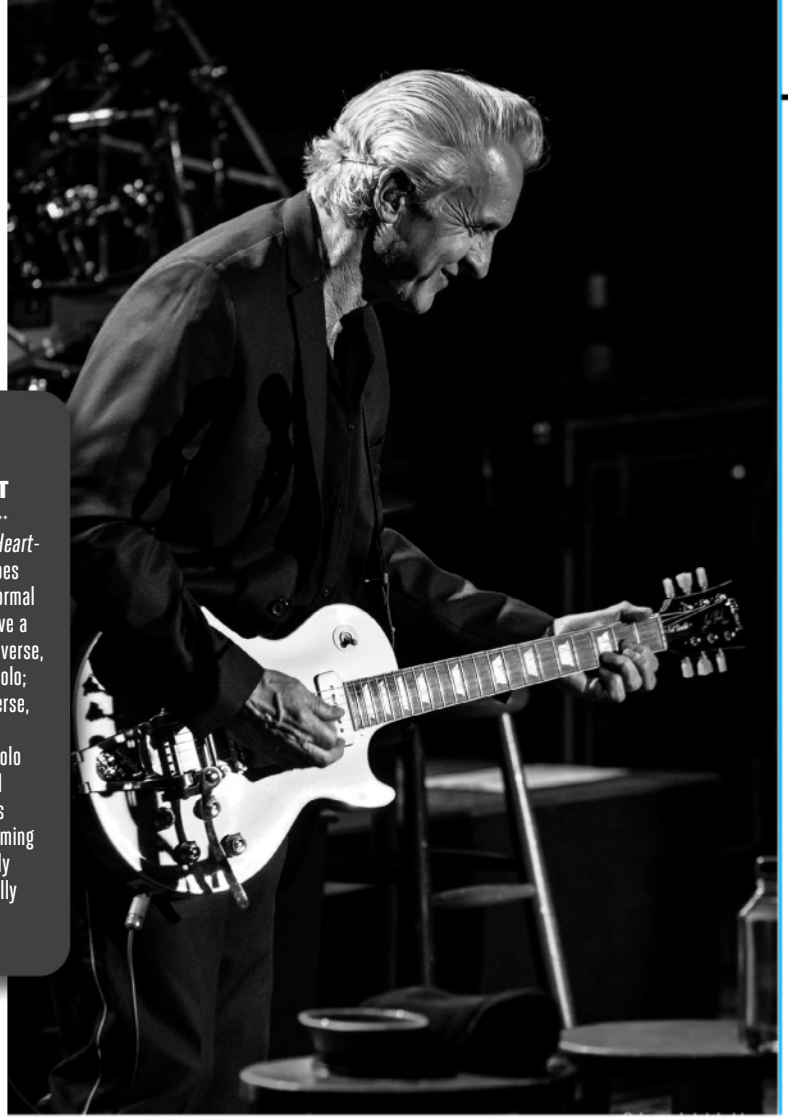
GARY MILLER/FILMMAGIC (THOROGOOD, 2011) POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES (MONTGOMERY) GEORGE CHIN (CLAPTON)

CLAPTON ANNOUNCES CROSSROADS FEST, JEFF BECK TRIBUTE SHOWS AND MORE

ERIC CLAPTON RECENTLY sprung into action with a few major show announcements. In early March, he broke the news about a pair of star-studded **Jeff Beck** tribute shows at London's Royal Albert Hall. The shows, which also will feature appearances by **Billy Gibbons, Gary Clark Jr., John McLaughlin, Rod Stewart** and many others, are set for May 22 and 23. In late March he announced a limited run of North American dates with support from **Jimmie Vaughan**. Then in mid April he announced the biggie — the 2023 Crossroads Guitar Festival. The two-day fest, which will take place in Los Angeles, will feature **Eric Gales, Samantha Fish, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Albert Lee, Robbie Robertson, Molly Tuttle, Roger McGuinn, Sierra Hull, Buddy Guy, Los Lobos, ZZ Top, Ariel Posen, H.E.R., Ben Haggard, Joe Bonamassa,** the **John Mayer Trio** and many, many more. Those dates are as follows:

September 8: Pittsburgh (PPG Paints Arena)
September 10: Toronto (Scotiabank Arena)
September 12: St. Louis (Enterprise Center)
September 14: Minneapolis (Xcel Energy Center)
September 16: Denver (Ball Arena)
September 23/24 (Crossroads): Los Angeles (Crypto.com Arena). *— Damian Fanelli*


MAKE YOUR PEACE
EMBRACE YOUR TONE
THE PEACEMAKER
'These pickups have all the clarity but all the aggression as well. The high strings poke their chest out just as much as the low strings. Every sound I need in one pickup.'
CHRIS ROBERTSON
Black Stone Cherry
Bare Knuckle
bareknucklepickups.co.uk
SIDESHOT IMAGES



JON R. LUINI/CHIME

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST

"I like [*Pat Benatar's 'Heartbreaker'*] because it goes against the grain. In normal song structure, you have a verse, chorus, another verse, chorus, middle eight, solo; you come back, do a verse, chorus... whatever. I chose not to do the solo until the end because I wanted to build up this tension. It's like I'm coming after you. When I finally get to the solo, it's really powerful."
– Neil Giraldo (2020)

NEIL GIRALDO

Pat Benatar's right-hand man (and husband) on how he wound up with Jeff Beck's pickups, his approach to singable guitar solos — and why being listed among the generally unsung greats ain't so bad after all

By Joe Bosso

AT THE START of our interview, Neil Giraldo wants to first talk about Jeff Beck, whom he calls his "top, number one influence," beginning with the British legend's time in the Yardbirds. "Early on, I heard the way Jeff attacked the instrument — it was like a compressor," he says. "It's not that it was loud, but it was right there, always. There are so many beautiful things about his playing. He started out playing one way, but he evolved into a whole other type of playing. That's such a special thing to be able to grow like that, and he did it spectacularly. He could play a symphony with one string."

Giraldo never got a chance to meet his idol, but he segues to an amusing anecdote involving Beck. "My good friend Seymour Duncan made pickups for me, and he made pickups for Jeff Beck," he says. "He sent me some pickups, I put them in my Strat, and I called him and said, 'I love them.' Then Seymour called me back and said, 'I've got good news and bad news.' I was like, 'Oh, shit,' and he went, 'The bad news is I sent you Jeff Beck's pickups, and he got yours.' I said, 'But Seymour, I love these,' and he said, 'The good news is he's not giving yours back.' I didn't have to give his back, either. I thought that was really funny."

Giraldo likes to tell stories, and with 40-plus years as one of rock 'n' roll's top guitarists, writers and producers under his belt, he's got a bunch of them. He's been working on his memoir, which he says will unfold in two parts. One half will be what he describes as "the playbook" in which he'll detail the writing and recording of all of the records he's been involved with; the second half will be "the story," which will undoubtedly recount his personal and professional life with his wife of 41 years, superstar singer Pat Benatar (to whom he always refers as "Patricia"). "For Patricia and I to have had the kind of success we've had, so many things had to be aligned," he says. "It almost sits on a metaphysical place. It's truly remarkable."

In partnership with Benatar, Giraldo has sold more than 45 million records. The duo were nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2019, but they didn't make the cut the following year. Their second time, however, was the charm, and last year the two were inducted into the Hall along with Dolly Parton, Judas Priest, Eminem, Eurythmics and others. Summing up his reaction to the recognition, he says, "Patricia has different feelings about it. I think of it this way: Anything that has words like 'Hall of Fame' in it is an honor, and you should respect that honor. It's interesting, though — I heard somebody once say, 'I finally realized that rock 'n' roll was important when that building was built,' and I thought, 'Wow, you are so missing the point.' The other thing is, I felt like I cut in line. Where's Son House? Where's Wynonie Harris?

"WHAT BOTHERED ME WAS SEEING DAVID BOWIE DOING THE SOLO STEVIE RAY

There are so many great, brilliant artists that I could mention."

At 67, Giraldo is at a good place in his life. In addition to writing and producing, he's working on a screenplay, and he serves as chairman of a spirits company he founded, Steel Bending Spirits LLC, which supports the music community and up-and-coming artists. On the heels of their Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, he and Benatar will hit the road later this year as special guests on Pink's Summer Carnival tour, during which he'll light up stages with the devastating licks and solos that have ruled radios since the late Seventies.

Guitar-hero worship is a funny thing. Based solely on his euphoric solo on Rick Springfield's 1981 smash "Jessie's Girl," Giraldo should qualify as one of the all-time greats, yet year after year he's rarely mentioned — make that never — on any guitar-centric "best" lists. Asked if he ever feels under-appreciated for his six-string abilities, he takes the high road.

"I don't feel any of that," he says. "I was talking to Scott Kempner from the Del-Lords and the Dictators. He's a true brother of mine. I said to him, 'It's interesting. I have all these favorite players, people like Roky Erickson, but nobody pays attention to any of them.' And Scott said to me, 'You know, you're in that group too.' I said, 'Don't start that with me.' And he goes, 'No, no, it's very important to be in that group. It's a more important, exclusive club. You should be honored to be in that thing.' After that, I thought, 'It's kind of cool to be in that group. Sure, why not?'

"As much as I loved Jeff Beck, I never wanted to be him," he continues. "I wanted to be Pete Townshend. I wanted to be the writer. I wanted to play chords. I wanted to be the leader. And [*with Benatar*], I found my Roger Daltrey, so this is perfect. Truthfully."

Before you hooked up with Pat Benatar, you played with Rick Derringer. How did your time with him prepare you for what would come next?

I can't even tell you how much it prepared me. Rick auditioned over 200 players. I honestly didn't think I'd get the gig. He taught me so much. I remember the first gig: I was used to playing in front of 300 people, sometimes 25 people. Now I'm playing in front of thousands. After the gig, Rick comes out and goes, "What the hell happened?" I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You sounded terrible." I went, "Rick, I was really nervous. I swear, I promise it'll never happen again." And it never happened again.

You had to learn fast.

It's the cymbal at your head, like Charlie Parker. It's the moment where you go, "I get it." What I learned from Rick was invaluable. Had I not been with him, I probably wouldn't have been prepared for what I was going to do next.

What was your audition for Pat like?

It wasn't an audition; it was a meeting. Patricia signed a record deal and started a project, but it was a massive failure. It wasn't anything like she wanted; she was looking for something completely different. Mike Chapman, who produced Rick Derringer's record earlier, saw me playing in the band. He was called in to produce a few songs for Patricia, but there was no band, no nothing. The A&R person, Jeff Aldridge, called me and said, "Listen, can you please meet this person? She wants to put a band together. She needs a partner. Can you please meet her?"

I didn't know that Jeff was going to be pitching me a girl. I went, "Oh, my God. How's that going to work? This is just insane." Then it dawned on me, and I went, "Pete Townshend. This is an opportunity." At my meeting with Patricia, I didn't even bring a guitar. I sat at the piano, played stuff and talked to her about things.

Musically, did she articulate what she was looking for? Did she have reference points?

Yes. First of all, her reference is very schooled. She went to school every day, while I studied music on the streets. She liked all kinds of music. She liked Led Zeppelin. She liked the idea of powerful, guitar-driven music that she could sing over with lots of energy. But she didn't know how to describe it to people. When they heard her talk, they thought, "Why don't you be more like Linda Ronstadt?" That's not what she wanted. She was looking for a partnership all along. She wanted to call it a band at that time, but it was already too late because it was established as a girl.

Within a very short time, your songs were all over the radio. "Heartbreaker," "Hit Me with Your Best Shot," "Promises in the Dark" and so many others. The solos were shreddy, but you could sing them.

Correct. I've never been a dweedler. What I would do is, I would take the last note of the vocal. I'd either start on that note or start a fifth up, and I'd take whatever that powerful note was and tell a story with the melody. Then I would end the solo so that the vocal could pick up where my conversation left off.

Now, it's not premeditated. I did it for [*Benatar's*] "Precious Time." They said, "What are we going to do in the solo section?" I said, "Let's just play 32 bars." And they go, "What are you going to do in 32 bars?" I go, "I don't know. I'll figure something out." I would name the bars or measures, and I'd say, "Let's do 16. Let's do eight here." I knew how I was going to start, but in the middle, I had no idea. I just did it.

The other thing is, I can't play with a very distorted sound. I love articulation. I mute strings hard with my right hand, and I use very heavy strings. I really bite down. It's all part of that Jeff Beck thing, even though he was more slinky. I take that same attack approach with the front end — heavy strings, heavy muting and articulation. If I don't hear the articulation, I can't play a solo cycle. I can't connect the story.

Even when writing and demoing a song, you wouldn't sketch out a solo?

I would stick to the beginning of it and the thought of where it's going to go. I wouldn't write a part out intentionally. The "Precious Time" solo was a funny one. I was having a tough time in my life. I was miserable and drank too much. I came into the studio and I had a bottle of vodka with me. I told the engineer, "Just punch me in — I'm only here for a couple takes. I've had a miserable night. I didn't sleep. Hit 'Record.' I'm going to do it a couple times." I did it a couple of times and said, "That's it. Goodbye." That was the solo to "Precious Time."

Neil Giraldo on his approach to solos: "I would take the last note of the vocal... [*and*] start on that note or a fifth up, and take whatever that powerful note was and tell a story with the melody. Then I would end the solo so that the vocal could pick up where my conversation left off"

VAUGHAN PLAYED [ON 'LET'S DANCE'], BECAUSE HIS FINGERS WEREN'T EVEN CLOSE"

TRAVIS SHINN (LEFT) MICHAEL BRANNON (RIGHT)

Just think — if you were happy that day, the solo would've been different.
Correct. But the whole thing is, it was a sad song.

A lot of people still don't know you played the solo on "Jessie's Girl." Did that ever bother you?
Not at all. My life was moving so fast then. I had the Number 1 record with "Jessie's Girl." I think *Crimes of Passion* was right up there. I was getting ready to do John Waite's solo record. Ozzy asked me to produce his record. There were so many things going on — I didn't even think twice about it. What bothered me was seeing David Bowie doing the solo Stevie Ray Vaughan played [*on "Let's Dance"*], because his fingers weren't even close. That bothered me more than Rick miming my solo.

I'll tell you something funny: I play with Rick on stage whenever we're doing shows together. His guitar player would always say, "Can you show me how to play this part?" And I'd go, "Sure." And as soon as I played the song, I'd always turn my back on the part. [*Laughs*]

Giraldo in recent times [*left*] and in action with Rick Derringer. "Rick auditioned over 200 players," Giraldo says. "I honestly didn't think I'd get the gig. He taught me so much"

You've never been tied to one particular guitar. You never came out with a signature model.
Probably because nobody asked me. If you see pictures of me from the early Eighties, I was playing Teles all the time. You can really bite down on a Tele. I have one I call my Muddy Waters Tele. It's like an orange-red and it's just nasty. When you play it, it's nasty. I've played Stratocasters, obviously, and early on, B.C. Riches. When I joined Rick Derringer's band, I had one SG and he goes, "That's not going to do. You could play a B.C. Rich, but you can't play a Mockingbird because that's what I play." So I played a [*B.C. Rich*] Eagle. I'm playing Les Pauls now because of the heavy strings I use. The scale of the guitar is shorter. It's easier to bend strings.

You and Pat are going to tour with Pink this summer. Obviously, she's a big fan of you two. Are you familiar with her stuff?
Sure. In fact, this is kind of funny. She had a drummer who'd been with her for a long time. I had him play on a holiday record I'm putting together. So when we saw Pink at the Rock Hall thing, I said to her, "Well, it'll be nice to see —"... I can't give you his name. She looked at me and said, "You're not going to see him." I was like, "Oh, I guess there was a problem." I didn't take it any further. He's not in the band, obviously. But yes, Pink is tremendous. A tremendous, great singer.

The Pink tour is mostly stadiums. You're no stranger to outdoor shows. Do you ever have a hard time getting your sound right on stage?
No, it's not that hard. I don't like pedals or effects. I used to use a harmonizer, early on, which was a stereo setup. I loved it because it was very clean. When I spoke to Mr. Eventide [*engineer Tony Agnello*], he told me the front end of that [*H*]949 [*Harmonizer*] sounded the way it did because a certain chip they used helped the front end of the sound. I liked that. Other than that, when I go out now, I have a little front-end mic pre and an amplifier and a delay. I really don't need anything else. It's all about playing. GW

"I WANTED TO BE PETE TOWNSHEND... AND [WITH PAT BENATAR], I FOUND MY ROGER DALTREY"

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"WE HAVE A SICKNESS — IT'S CALLED 'GUITAR PEDALS'!"

How the ambient music of Hammock is created — a "guitar symphony" with tons of effects but no rules

By **Ellie Rogers** Photos by **Brian Siskind and Jim Demain**

TWENTY YEARS INTO their recording career, ambient duo Hammock have emerged with their most ambitious, life-affirming and guitar-stuffed album to date. Devised by Nashville-based guitarists-cum-producers Marc Byrd and Andrew Thompson, *Love in the Void* is Hammock's 12th LP.

The recording took place over 10 days at Trace Horse Studios and featured contributions from outside musicians and engineers. "When you get to a point where you feel comfortable failing in front of one another," Byrd says, "that's when the magic starts to happen." Enchanting from the get-go, the largely instrumental record spirals outwards from the beat-less reverie of "Procession," to the melodically intricate "It's OK to Be Afraid of the Universe," through heart-pounding EBow chaos at the epicenter of "Gods Becoming Memories" and beyond.

Dialing in from Byrd's Breathturn home studio for this interview, we find the pair hard at work building a new track around reversed guitars. Such out-of-the-box thinking is characteristic of their approach, and years of nudging boundaries has led them to perfect practices that many would never even imagine in service of their experimental masterpieces. "We come at it from a more intuitive place than a technical place," Byrd says. "Friends who had the training get bored with guitar a lot faster than I do. I don't really relate to anyone who's ever said they're bored with the guitar, and I've been doing this for a long time."

As Thompson puts it, "There's never-ending possibilities — and that's the beauty of it." Whether exploring unfamiliar tunings or simply moving from one guitar to another, he underscores that "something new underneath your fingers," is often all it takes to inspire the spirit of invention.

An average Hammock song will feature 12 or more guitar parts, ingeniously layered and mixed to create depth and texture. "To cut through the wall of sound by the end of a song, the main part will be doubled or tripled," Byrd says. "Sometimes that will be by taking the capo and going an octave up and playing that same part with a different voicing, and then you'll have a countermelody, an EBow part and a swell guitar." The results can be surprising, Thompson adds. "It's funny; there'll be some songs with very few tracks that sound massive," he says. "Then there'll be ones that have a massive amount of tracks that sound very small. That's all by design."

Carving out space for melodies among the textural strata is key, and the duo cite the influence of David Gilmour, Johnny Marr and Lindsey Buckingham on their tasteful toplines. According to Byrd, "The approach is, instead of falling back on a wall of distortion and just adding another layer, how about adding another melody? Our manager thinks the way we approach guitar is like the way Brian Wilson approached harmonies in the Beach Boys." Peter Katis — who mixed Hammock's 2016 album, *Everything and Nothing*, once coined it "guitar symphony."

"When we're building songs with all these separate melodies, we set up each one as if it were in an orchestra," Thompson says. "Each part will be the only thing on that track, so you can literally approach it when you mix as if you were conducting."

A lifetime of collecting means there's a vast reserve of different guitars to call upon as required, including a humbucker-clad Schecter Robert Smith UltraCure that Thompson dubs "surprisingly great," as well as more likely suspects like Jazzmasters, Danelectros and baritones. A 12-string BilT Relevator, loaded with gold foils and resembling the lovechild of a Jaguar and a Baldwin-Burns Double Six, earns a chef's kiss from Byrd for its bold jangle, and a Gibson ES-165 Herb Ellis imparts its classy tones to the closing track, "The End Is the Beginning." "That thing, straight into an amp, is beautiful," Thompson says.

As for how dry tones like this find a home amid slabs of delay, reverb and fuzz, Thompson distills the method: "What we'll do a lot, if we have two or three guitars doing one part, is have a stereo guitar doing all the wash, and

Marc Byrd on guitar [*top*] and Andrew Thompson on guitar [*below*]. "There's never-ending possibilities — and that's the beauty of it," Thompson says

"I DON'T RELATE TO ANYONE WHO'S EVER SAID THEY'RE BORED WITH THE GUITAR" — MARC BYRD

then — for example, with something we were working on yesterday — a mono off to the right that's pretty tripped out, and a mono off to the left that's basically dry. You get the clarity coming through but you still get the float." Adds Byrd: "Our doubling approach is not necessarily "get the sound, get the part and then double it with the same exact sound. We're all about creating more warble in the part and making your head vibrate."

To achieve this, they track through multiple amps and make use of plenty of effects. "There's a sickness we both suffer from — it's called 'guitar pedals,'" says Byrd, whose initial interest was sparked by the Edge. But he's quick to point out that an enormous pedalboard is no shortcut to shoegaze mastery. Byrd used to wear through the knees of his jeans studying the craft — and has often been hired just to manipulate pedals for other bands' recording sessions. "A lot of people think they can do ambient music if they just have the right pedalboard, and they can't," he says. "It's an artform in itself."

Consequently, there's no such thing as a "static" pedalboard when it comes to Hammock, and theirs are forever being yanked apart and re-configured. "It's all in service of the song, and that's why it looks like such a disaster all the time," Andrew says. Byrd cites the Bixonic Expandora fuzz as "one of my favorites because when you combine it with different distortions, it creates more clarity." Then there's an old-school Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler that's featured on every album, and which Byrd once spent two days straight fiddling with to develop the "signature Hammock auto swell." They've recently had to upgrade to a MkII because years of vigorous tapping have worn out the original.

Thanks to having a zero-tolerance policy toward complacency, a few old staples — including reverbs by Boss and a Keeley C4 Compressor — are relegated to the subs bench. Even the laptop they're calling from sits atop a Roland Space Echo that used to inhabit the end of their chain, but which has recently been sidelined by the likes of Strymon's NightSky, Walrus Audio's R1 and, their current number one, the Neunaber Immerse MKII Ultimate Reverberator.

After years of self-direction, Byrd has one key piece of advice to pass along: "There are no rules. If you have a good ear, trust your ear. There shouldn't be a limitation because someone at Guitar Center told you your pedalboard has to be set up a certain way. The order of the modulation and distortion can be switched around depending on what you're trying to do."

While the tones themselves might emanate from myriad metal boxes, the overall sonic scope of *Love in the Void* was enabled by a lengthy creative process, which, in turn, was enabled by the fact that Hammock work to their own schedule, rather than that of a major label. Thompson reveals that their post-production phase takes "an obscene amount of time," and the album is all the richer for having had 18 months to evolve.

"Time is good for art," Byrd says. "It keeps you from taking this conveyor belt-type approach. There are times when you feel like you're a channel; something rushes in and you've got to capture that moment, but that's the starting point. Get that down immediately, and build everything on top." GW

"An obscene amount of time" is spent on post-production, Thompson says

"THERE ARE NO RULES. IF YOU HAVE A GOOD EAR, TRUST YOUR EAR" — MARC BYRD

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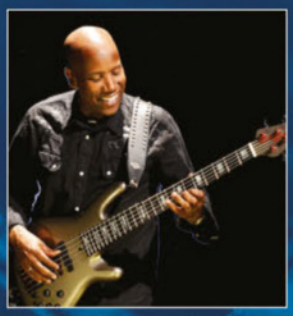

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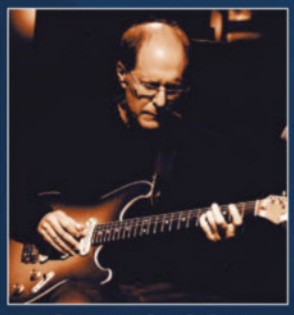

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HOT FUZZ

GW P.38

10 recent-vintage fuzz pedals — in pretty much every price range — that'll help you nail everything from George Harrison's buzz-saw "What Is Life" tone to stoner metal bliss à la *Electric Wizard and Fu Manchu*

By AMIT SHARMA

EVERY GUITARIST NEEDS at least one fuzz pedal. Even if you're the kind of player who tends to live on the clean channel and disregard distorted sounds, you can still benefit from owning one — whether to clean up via your guitar volume for a treble-focused "glassy" tone or to unlock ear-pleasing octaves as a special effect. Anyone who has been heavily influenced by classic artists like Jimi Hendrix and the Stooges, late-Eighties greats like Mudhoney and Smashing Pumpkins or modern masters such as St. Vincent and Chelsea Wolfe, however, will probably have considered investing in several of these boxes across the years — and with good reason.

As legend has it, the invention of the fuzz pedal dates back to engineer Glenn Snoddy's work on the sessions for Marty Robbins' "Don't Worry" in 1960. A faulty channel on the mixing desk at Quonset Hut Studio in Nashville gave Grady Martin's Danelectro baritone an unexpected tone, one that Snoddy later reverse-engineered and sold to Gibson, who in turn made history by releasing the Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone in 1962. Prior to this, guitarists like Link Wray had been overloading their amplifiers and poking holes through the speakers in hope of achieving similar distorted noises, damaging expensive equipment with no real guarantees in terms of the fruits of their efforts.

Once Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones popularized the original Maestro on 1965's "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," fuzz pedals were lusted after by nearly every electric guitarist on earth, and said earth has never been quite the same. The next few years bore witness to the arrival of the Tone Bender, Fuzz Face, Big Muff and many more — the circuits of which were then copied to death and remain so to this day, each bringing its own nuances, character and definition of what fuzz really stands for. From old-school to new, simple to multifaceted, here are 10 of our favorites (that are available right now).

ELECTRO-HARMONIX SATISFACTION

$72, ehx.com

While the brand established by Mike Matthews in the late Sixties is arguably best known for the Big Muff, they haven't shied away from other designs, like the Ripped Speaker, Cock Fight and Flatiron Fuzz. The Satisfaction was added to the lineup in 2014 as a no-frills option for fans of vintage-style units. It might only have two knobs (Volume and Attack), but its all-analog true-bypass circuitry with silicon transistors can cover a fair amount of ground, from subtle grit to thicker saturation and beyond. Given its name, you might think it's a direct clone of the FZ-1 used by the Stones, but that's not the case; the schematic is more like another Sixties fuzz — the Jordan Bosstone — minus the bass cap and clipping diodes, though with space to add them for those who feel so inclined. Clever! [*Ed.'s note: This puppy is just right for the riff to George Harrison's "What Is Life."*]

KINGTONE
MINIFUZZ V2
$299, kingtoneguitar.com

They say not to judge a book by its cover, but this specimen from California sounds every bit as good as it looks — perhaps even better. One key feature is the ability to switch between the fuller-sounding and less temperamental silicon BC183 transistors and its warmer, more vintage-leaning germanium mode — essentially giving you two fuzz pedals in one, with controls for Volume, Bias and Fuzz. Users also can use the three-way tone toggle to switch between Fat, Zonk and Vintage and find six external DIP switches on the side to further customize the output level, tone and even engage a buffer — making it the most customizable fuzz in this roundup. It's hand-wired with top-mounted jacks and sounds phenomenal in just about any setting. Keep in mind this runs on a 9V battery or 9V DC jack.

PEDAL PAWN
FUZZ
$239, pedalpawn.com

A few years ago, a video surfaced of Eric Gales demonstrating a fuzz made by relative newcomers Pedal Pawn, rather than the Mojo Hand FX Colossus he's typically seen with. "It sounds really awesome; I really like how it's put together with two simple knobs," the blues maverick said in the footage, also noting how "you don't even have to turn the fuzz off; you can just roll down the volume and it's clean." It's no surprise orders started coming through thick and fast, effectively launching a brand that has since expanded into other famous circuits made by César Díaz and Roger Mayer for Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix, respectively. Thousands of vintage Fuzz Faces were tested to refine the circuitry for the U.K. company's inaugural release, which uses rare NTE silicon transistors to sound extra fat when all the way up — and glassy with the guitar volume backed down.

MUSE'S MATT BELLAMY LOVES HIS ZVEX FUZZ FACTORY SO MUCH THAT HE STARTED REQUESTING THAT MANSON GUITAR WORKS BUILD THEM INTO HIS SIGNATURE GUITARS

ZVEX EFFECTS
FUZZ FACTORY
$319, zvex.com

If you're after the fuzz with the most buzz — figuratively speaking, that is — look no further. This unit from ZVEX has been used by everyone from Andy Summers, Tame Impala and Trent Reznor to Scott Henderson, St. Vincent and John Frusciante. Muse singer/guitarist Matt Bellamy loves his so much that he started requesting that Manson Guitar Works build them into his signature instruments, so it'd be fair to say the Fuzz Factory is in a league of its own. There are controls for Volume, Gate, Compression, Drive and Stab — and according to the manual, it can cover all kinds of sounds from Velcro, Smooth and Radio to Cleanish Hi Octave Intermodulation via its pair of NOS Sixties germanium transistors. It comes with a lifetime warranty, so there's a lot to like here, although (like the Kingtone) it runs on battery or 9V DC rather than AC.

SM
FUZZ
$366, smfuzz.com

Built in the U.K. with carefully selected and hand-biased AC128 germanium transistors, all housed in one of the classiest enclosures out there, the SM Fuzz is a signature pedal created by Tom Jones guitarist and blues solo artist Scott McKeon. It's also been used by other players such as Gary Clark Jr., James Bay, Tyler Bryant and Doyle Bramhall II, which speaks volumes about its quality. There are just two controls for Fuzz and Volume, though the latter also works as an on/off switch, allowing users to keep the pedal plugged in without draining the battery. Another bonus is the temperature tolerant circuitry — which means it's a Sixties-style germanium transistor fuzz that won't react differently in hotter climates, instead providing a more consistent tone wherever you might find yourself. Like many other germanium fuzz pedals, it's positive ground and therefore requires its own isolated power — which is worth bearing in mind if you have a busy board.

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES
HOOF
$179, earthquakerdevices.com

Partly inspired by the green Russian Big Muff, the Hoof utilizes its own hybrid germanium/silicon design that presents a "best of both" scenario when it comes to your tone. As well as the usual fuzz controls, there's a Shift knob that adjusts the mid content, from heavily boosted to extremely scooped at full clockwise — a handy tool for those who really want to hone in on what kind of saturation is being created. According to EarthQuaker, some of its thicker, high-gain settings were inspired by a wildwood haunted by a coven of devilish beasts, hence its name. In any case, having appeared on the boards of fuzz extremists like Dan Auerbach, Matt Pike and Justin Meldal-Johnsen, this is the kind of pedal that's capable of unleashing hell at every turn — as long as you're okay with not using batteries, that is.

BOSS
FZ-1W
$199, boss.info

For a company so deeply entwined in the history of overdrives and distortions, Boss didn't really concern themselves much with fuzz pedals until the Nineties with the development of the FZ-2 Hyper Fuzz and the FZ-3, followed by the digital COSM-charged FZ-5 launched in 2007. But the last few years have seen them really up the stakes with the limited run of 3,000 TB-2Ws — identical recreations of Sola Sound's Tone Bender MKII (serial number #500, to be precise). They then took some of that magic and created the FZ-1W, the first Waza Craft pedal to look forwards, not backwards, with its own brand-new design, yielding some truly mesmerizing results. Here you'll find controls for Level, Tone and Fuzz, as well as the option to switch between its Vintage mode for a wide expression that's "raspy and assertive without being harsh" and its Modern mode for a "focused midrange and fatter tone."

P.41

THE JANUS ISN'T JUST A FUZZ, GIVEN THAT ITS LEFT SIDE IS DEDICATED TO TREMOLO — A PAIRING YOU DON'T TYPICALLY FIND IN ONE PEDAL

DUNLOP
MINI GERMANIUM FUZZ FACE
$149, jimdunlop.com

Arriving some four years after the Maestro, the Fuzz Face may not have been the very first fuzz pedal produced commercially, but it is surely the one with the richest heritage, with strong links to early guitar heroes such as Jimi Hendrix, David Gilmour and Duane Allman. The original was made by Arbiter Electronics, which was later succeeded by units from Dallas Arbiter, CBS/Arbiter and current producer Dunlop, who took over in 1993. This current version revisits the vintage flavor and warmth of yesteryear, thanks to its mismatched germanium transistors, though repackaged in a smaller housing to suit modern convenience. Jim Dunlop also make other versions using a BC108 silicon transistor, including the Hendrix signature models — though it has to be said, if you're a vintage fuzz purist, this should sit at the top of the list.

WALRUS AUDIO
JANUS
$289, walrusaudio.com

This offering from Oklahoma City's Walrus Audio could easily be one of the most divisive designs we've ever seen. It's not even just a fuzz, given that its left side is dedicated to tremolo — a pairing you don't typically find in one pedal. But it's the dual joystick controls that guitarists will either love or hate, a feature that seems light years away from the early units that put fuzz on the map. That hasn't stopped modern players like Misha Mansoor, Dallas Green and Dustin Kensrue from experimenting with the Janus, especially given how it boasts three selectable clipping diodes, an optional bass boost and a blend knob to mix in your dry signal — covering a lot more ground than a vintage-style fuzz before you even get into the tremolo options. Using both together, according to Walrus Audio, can help users uncover "a landscape of distorted textures."

SITEK
PANDORA
$160, sitek.rocks

Run by Andy and Hania Sitek, a husband-and-wife team operating out of northern Poland, this relatively new brand creates high-end products at a mid price point — each standing as its own "muse" to create magical sounds. The Pandora is their re-imagination of the Shin-Ei Super-Fuzz, the most saturated of the Sixties originals, with some well-considered additions to bring it into the modern age. The Color knob can take you from highly compressed tones that cough and spit to thicker and more open-sounding sustains. There are also two modes: asymmetrical clipping with a pair of silicon and germanium diodes — creating a more pronounced upper octave effect — or symmetrical, which uses two NOS germanium diodes for an emphasized tightness. If you're playing the kind of stoner metal typified by bands like Electric Wizard and Fu Manchu, or the garagey alternative rock made famous by Dinosaur Jr. and Mudhoney, this will definitely be of interest. GW

OVERLOOKED, UNDERRATED, SIDELINED AND DOWNPLAYED SIXTIES GUITAR HEROES PART 6: ZAL YANOVSKY

AMERICANA'S GUITAR GODFATHER

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF **ZAL YANOVSKY** OF THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

BY ALAN DI PERNA

THE TWANGY GRANDEUR of Zal Yanovksy's big guitar riff on the Lovin' Spoonful's "You Didn't Have to Be So Nice" made it a Top 10 hit in the winter of 1965-'66. The track also caught the ear of Brian Wilson, inspiring him to write the Beach Boys' classic "God Only Knows." Another Spoonful hit, "Daydream," influenced Paul McCartney as he was putting together the Beatles' "Good Day Sunshine" from their groundbreaking 1966 album, *Revolver*.

In the mid Sixties, the Lovin' Spoonful were one the most innovative and well-regarded bands around. Yanovsky's whimsical, wild, wistful and weird guitar work was no small part of the quartet's popularity. It was the sunshine in the band's self-described "Good Time Music." Sweet, weepy country licks, amped-up blues, fuzzed-out psychedelia.... Yanovsky's broad stylistic range proved the perfect counterpoint to frontman John Sebastian's wry, folksy songcraft,

The Lovin' Spoonful's Zal Yanovsky in March 1967

FRANK LENNON/ TORONTO STAR VIA GETTY IMAGES

multi-instrumental palette and fine-tuned gift for pop melodicism.

Even in the non-conformist Sixties, Zalman Yanovsky stood out from the crowd, with his boho-hobo-cowboy fashion sense, clownish on-stage antics and the warped, wavy contours of his Guild S-200 Thunderbird. Like Zal himself, it was a guitar ahead of its time, complete with a "kickstand" built into the back body. If you were serious about rock guitar in the mid Sixties, Yanovsky is a guitarist you were serious about. He was an early adopter of the Thunderbird, and the broad range of tonal colors he could achieve with that guitar inspired Jefferson Airplane guitarist Jorma Kaukonen to get his own Thunderbird, which he played on the landmark psychedelic tracks "White Rabbit" and "Somebody to Love" from their 1967 album *Surrealistic Pillow*.

"[*Zal*] was a great player, so of course I checked out his gear," Kaukonen later recalled. "The T-Bird was one of the most different looking guitars I had ever seen... I also bought a Standel Super Imperial [*amp*] because Zal was playing through one."

The Lovin' Spoonful are a major crossroads band in the story of Sixties rock guitar. It was John Sebastian who turned Mike Bloomfield on to the Gibson Les Paul, setting it on the path to becoming one of the ultimate rock guitars. Sebastian's own 1957 Les Paul ended up in the hands of George Harrison, who named the instrument "Lucy." Harrison had received the guitar from Eric Clapton, who'd got it from Rick Derringer, who'd obtained it from Sebastian himself, in a swap for an amp that reportedly took place when the Lovin' Spoonful were on the road with Derringer's hit-making garage rock band, the McCoys. The Spoonful guitar lineage is almost Biblical in magnitude.

As is their importance in the music we now call Americana. Back then, we just called it folk-rock. Along with the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and Simon & Garfunkel, the Lovin' Spoonful were one of the key groups to emerge as part of the folk-rock scene that Bob Dylan had ignited in 1965 by bringing electric instrumentation into his previously all-acoustic music. Electrifying folk traditions opened up new stylistic vistas in rock music and rock guitar playing. Accomplished folk pickers like Jerry Garcia, Roger McGuinn, Stephen Stills, Jorma Kaukonen and others began ditching their Martins for Strats, 335s, Rickenbacker 12s and, yes, even the odd Guild Thunderbird.

Yanovsky had come up as part of that wave. Born in Toronto, he was among the folk-rooted Canadians — Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, Robbie Robertson — who'd migrated down to New York's Greenwich Village and its legendary folk scene in the mid Sixties. The Village had launched Dylan; Joan Baez; Peter, Paul & Mary and others into the pop mainstream. Folkies flocked there hoping to be next in line. There were more skilled folk pickers per square foot of Greenwich Village real estate — which, unbelievably, was relatively cheap back then — than had probably ever been amassed in any previous time or place.

By the time Yanovsky landed in the Village, he'd teamed up with fellow Canadian, and future Mamas & Papas singer, Denny Doherty to form the Halifax Three. In New York, Yanovsky and Doherty joined forces with Cass Elliot, another future Mamas & Papas singer, to form the Mugwumps — a group that has been described as Greenwich Village's first rock band. "Zally" brought a dazzling range of styles to the picture, based on his deep listening to American vernacular music. Charlie Christian's guitar work on "One Sweet Letter from You" with Lionel Hampton was one of the tracks that entranced him as a teenage guitar novice. But he was drawn to a broad range of players and styles.

"I liked Elmore James, Chet Atkins, Floyd Cramer," Zal told one interviewer. "The first time I heard [*Buddy Holly's*] 'That'll Be the Day,' it was a killer. I liked Ferlin Husky's 'Gone.' Hank Ballard's 'Finger Poppin' Time' blew me away. I was never a big Elvis fan, but I liked Hank Williams, Les Paul and Mary Ford, Ray Charles, Fats Domino and Huey 'Piano' Smith."

Zal's wide vocabulary as a guitarist is what led aspiring singer/songwriter John Sebastian to poach him from the Mugwumps, enticing him to join a new band that Sebastian and his manager were putting together in late 1964.

"He could play like all these [*different*] people, yet he still had his own overpowering personality," Sebastian later recalled. "Out of this we could, I thought, craft something with real flexibility."

Sebastian brought his own impressive range of stylistic influences from early 20th-century blues, jug band, string band, ragtime and kindred styles. Like a lot of ambitious songwriters, he aspired not only to write hit songs but to write in a variety of styles that are considered great songwriters' genres — mournful country ballads, Tin Pan Alley standards, raunchy blues, risqué rags... Yanovsky had the scope and six-string wherewithal to provide just the right licks and tricks to serve this agenda. And when the rhythm section of Steve Boone (bass) and Joe Butler (drums) fell into place, the Lovin' Spoonful were born. The group name came from a line in "Coffee Blues" by Mississippi John Hurt, a bluesman whom Dylan also admired and emulated.

The Lovin' Spoonful often described their sound as jug band music — a nod to the African-American folk genre that flourished in Memphis in the 1920s-'30s with groups like Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers and the Memphis Jug Band. Of course, the Lovin' Spoonful weren't an actual latter-day jug band like, say, Jim Kweskin & the Jug Band. Nobody ever blew across the top of a whiskey jug to create bass notes. But the tag was indicative of the Spoonful's old-timey vibe. This was something that had become trendy in the mid Sixties, via pop hits like "Winchester Cathedral" (1966) by the New Vaudeville Band and "Hello Hello" (1967) by Sopwith Camel, perhaps finding its ultimate expression in the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's* period.

Most of all, the jug band label helped differentiate the Lovin' Spoonful from other artists lumped under the folk-rock tag. While kindred spirits, they were all quite different. The Byrds didn't sound like the Buffalo Springfield, who didn't sound like Bob Dylan. If anything, the Lovin' Spoonful wore their folk influences more prominently on their sleeves than some of the other folk-rockers. They were fairly unabashed, venturing into stylistic realms that might easily have put off teenage rock 'n' roll fans of the day.

As it turned out, however, the kids loved it. Between 1965 and '66, the Lovin' Spoonful landed no fewer than seven tracks in the Top 10. The first of these, "Do You Believe in Magic" exemplifies what was always the most prominent influence within Yanovsky's eclectic rootsy style — Chet Atkins-inspired country picking. Staccato, palm-muted embellishments, gorgeous volume swells, deep-talkin' low notes — these quintessential country moves were all integral to his guitar vocabulary. Zal was a trailblazer in bringing country guitar into rock music. A good two years before the Byrds famously "went country" with *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, Yanovsky was twanging away on tracks like "Nashville Cats" from 1966. At times, his guitar work can sound a bit like that of the mid Sixties' other great Chet Atkins rock 'n' roll acolyte, George Harrison.

Yanovsky walked it like he talked it — or played it, in this instance. He's generally credited as being the first rock musician to sport cowboy hats and fringed buckskin jackets. By the time Woodstock rolled around in '69, all that buckskin fringe had become a counterculture commonplace, if not cliche; but in '65 it was fresh and new. That's how quickly the zeitgeist moved in those days.

Western wear was just one element in Zal's wonderfully off-kilter fashion sense, which also embraced things

CA/REDFERNS

The Lovin' Spoonful on *Ready Steady Go!* in the U.K. in 1966; [*from left*] Steve Boone, Yanovsky, John Sebastian and Joe Butler

like mile-wide mod neckties, slept-in looking corduroy jackets with buttonhole flowers, vests and, of course, the ubiquitous striped T-shirts that Brian Jones had brought into vogue. Zal also slotted into a mid- to late-Sixties phenomenon that might be described as "counterculture Jewish cool." Other key exponents would include Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, Mike Bloomfield, Lenny Bruce, Abbie Hoffman, Leonard Cohen and Woody Allen.

But Yanovsky's yearning, playful, wildly inventive guitar style is what set him apart. It's interesting that Zal cited country piano legend Floyd Cramer as one of his guitar influences. Both men could break your heart just by rolling the second interval up to a major third at just the right moment in a song. The sparkling lead guitar on Lovin' Spoonful hits, moreover, was just the tip of the iceberg, enticing savvy listeners to deep album tracks that took matters further afield. The mid Sixties were the time when the 33 rpm vinyl album began to eclipse the 45 rpm single as rock music's main expressive medium. The songs that bracketed the big hits on an LP were no longer mere low-quality "filler." Groups began exploring this extra vinyl real estate to create music that might not be commercial enough for the mainstream, but still interesting to their more serious fans.

In the Lovin' Spoonful's case, this meant a deeper dive into folk tradition. Which provided Yanovsky with a spacious canvas. On the group's debut album, *Do You Believe in Magic*, he serves up some countryish playing on "Blues in the Bottle" and his supple electric fingerpicking energizes "Fishin' Blues." The latter is a song from 1911 by country bluesman Henry Thomas, misattributed to Sebastian on the album sleeve. Sebastian would later reference Henry Thomas in a song by that name on the Spoonful's third album. And in a era when the 12-bar urban blues idiom was rapidly becoming an almost obligatory showcase for rock guitarists, Yanovsky provides some first-rate, reverby, late-night comping and soloing on the standard "Sportin' Life" and the instrumental "Night Owl

Blues," a nod to the Greenwich Village club where the Lovin' Spoonful honed their act in 1965.

"The first album is a good reflection of our shows," Yanovsky later said. "It wasn't like we had a mission statement or anything, so we played what we liked... I was 19. It was great."

With a few hit records to their credit, the Lovin' Spoonful were able to stretch further and dig deeper on their second album, *Daydream*. It was named for their old-timey 1966 hit, which featured more fine Chet Atkins-inspired lead guitar work from Yanovsky. The LP is less reliant on folk traditional repertoire than the first disc. There are more songwriting contributions from Sebastian, both on his own and in collaboration with bandmates. He and Yanovsky co-wrote the wistful "It's Not Time Now," which features some supple electric fingerpicking from Zal.

Daydream is also where Yanovsky began to expand the range of tones he was able, and often perversely willing, to wrest from the electric guitar. He was the kind of guy who wasn't afraid to go full fuzz on a country number like "There She Is." This is the wonderful thing about the Lovin' Spoonful: they were steeped in tradition, but they were never traditionalists. Their take on America's folk legacy was lighthearted, easy-going, a bit tongue-in-cheek and never hesitant to reach for an unusual instrument or bizarre tone.

A major example of this on Daydream is "Jug Band Music," on which Yanovsky is credited with playing "yackety-throw-up guitar." This was simply a bass guitar processed through a fuzz box — quite a wild sound in '65 when the album was recorded, and the same year in which the Beatles had their own fuzz bass epiphany with "Think for Yourself" from *Rubber Soul*. "Jug Band Music" also features some fine "garage country" guitar interplay between Yanovsky and Sebastian. They were a good two-guitar team, but on many tracks Sebastian played autoharp, harmonica or keyboards instead, leaving the guitar work entirely in Zal's capable hands. The goal was always to make each song different — stylistically, tonally or otherwise — never succumbing to formula and always avoiding being pigeon-holed.

Hums of the Lovin' Spoonful, the group's third album, would prove to be their crowning glory — their *Rubber Soul*, as it were, encompassing everything from stately baroque chamber pop to bumptious bluegrass. Among the record's three Top 10 hits — "Summer in the City," "Rain on the Roof" and "Nashville Cats," the latter is surely one of Zal Yanovsky's shining moments. The eloquent, chicken-fried licks he weaves around Sebastian's lyrics and vocal melody are almost like a second, contrapuntal, singing voice — imparting authenticity to the narrative, which misidentifies Nashville, rather than Memphis, as the home of the legendary Sun Records label. And Zally's brief outro solo leaves you longing for more.

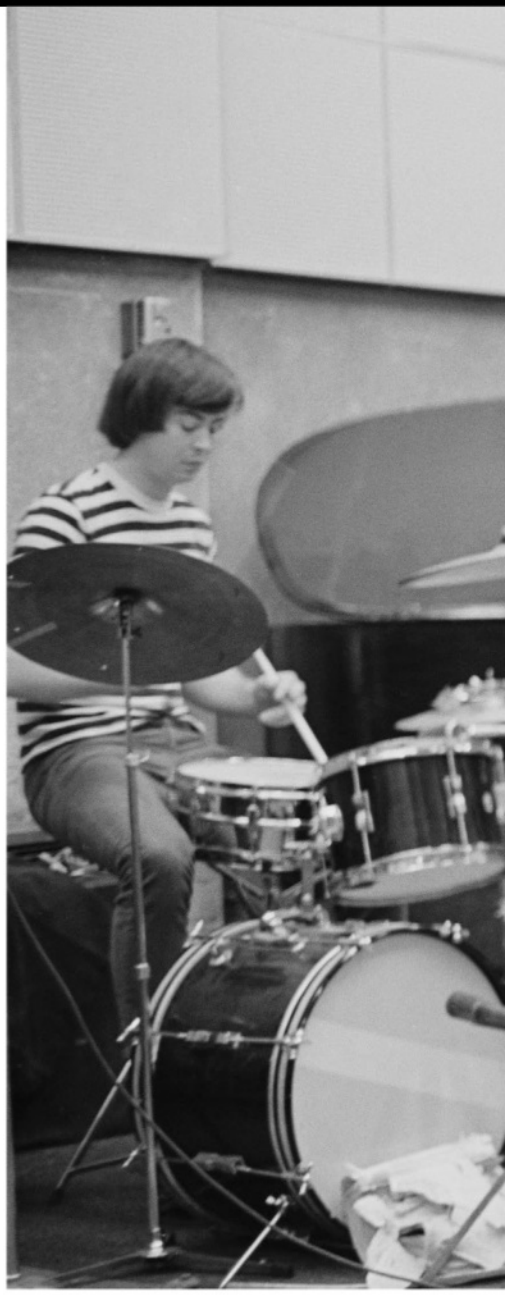
Hums tracks like "Darlin' Companion" satisfy that longing with some beautiful two-guitar work from Yanovsky and Sebastian. The track became a country standard after Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash recorded it in 1969. Zal channels Howlin' Wolf with a fuzzy riff and "wolf call" vocal on "Voodoo in My Basement." He contributes moody guitar atmospheres and jazzy, double-stop octave soloing on "Coconut Grove," which he co-wrote with Sebastian. "4 Eyes" benefits from *tour-de-force* slide guitar work that manages to be manic and masterfully nuanced at the same time. And the trippy interludes in "Full Measure" anticipate the psychedelic revolution just getting ignited at the time. As if all this weren't enough, Zal picked up a banjo for the bluegrassy "Henry Thomas" and bluesy "Bes' Friends," a song that wouldn't have been out of place in Bessie Smith's repertoire and which also features clarinet licks played by legendary rock photographer Henry Diltz.

Confirming the Lovin' Spoonful's status as a mid-Sixties buzz band, they were chosen to create the soundtrack for the 1966 debut feature films by two of America's greatest directors — Woody Allen's *What's Up, Tiger Lily?* and Francis Ford Coppola's *You're a Big Boy Now*. But by 1967, Yanovsky had left the Lovin' Spoonful under something of a cloud. For one, an artistic rift had developed between him and Sebastian. Zal had little use for the more introspective style of songwriting Sebastian was starting to explore.

"I told John his songwriting had really gone down the toilet," Yanovsky later recalled. Not long after that, he was out of the band. He appeared on only one track, "Six O'Clock" from the Lovin' Spoonful's fourth album, 1967's *Everything Playing*.

But that wasn't all. In 1966 Yanovsky and bassist Steve Boone had been arrested in San Francisco for possession of cannabis. In an effort to avoid deportation back to Canada, Zal went along with a police deal to provide the name of the person who'd sold him the weed. The plan was that the band would hire a high-powered lawyer to defend the dealer in court. But he went to jail nonetheless, and Yanovsky was virulently denounced in the pages of the *Los Angeles Free Press* and other counterculture outlets. In the late Sixties, you did not narc on your friends, nor betray your brothers and sisters to "the Man." The counterculture had its own cancel culture, half a century before that term came into use.

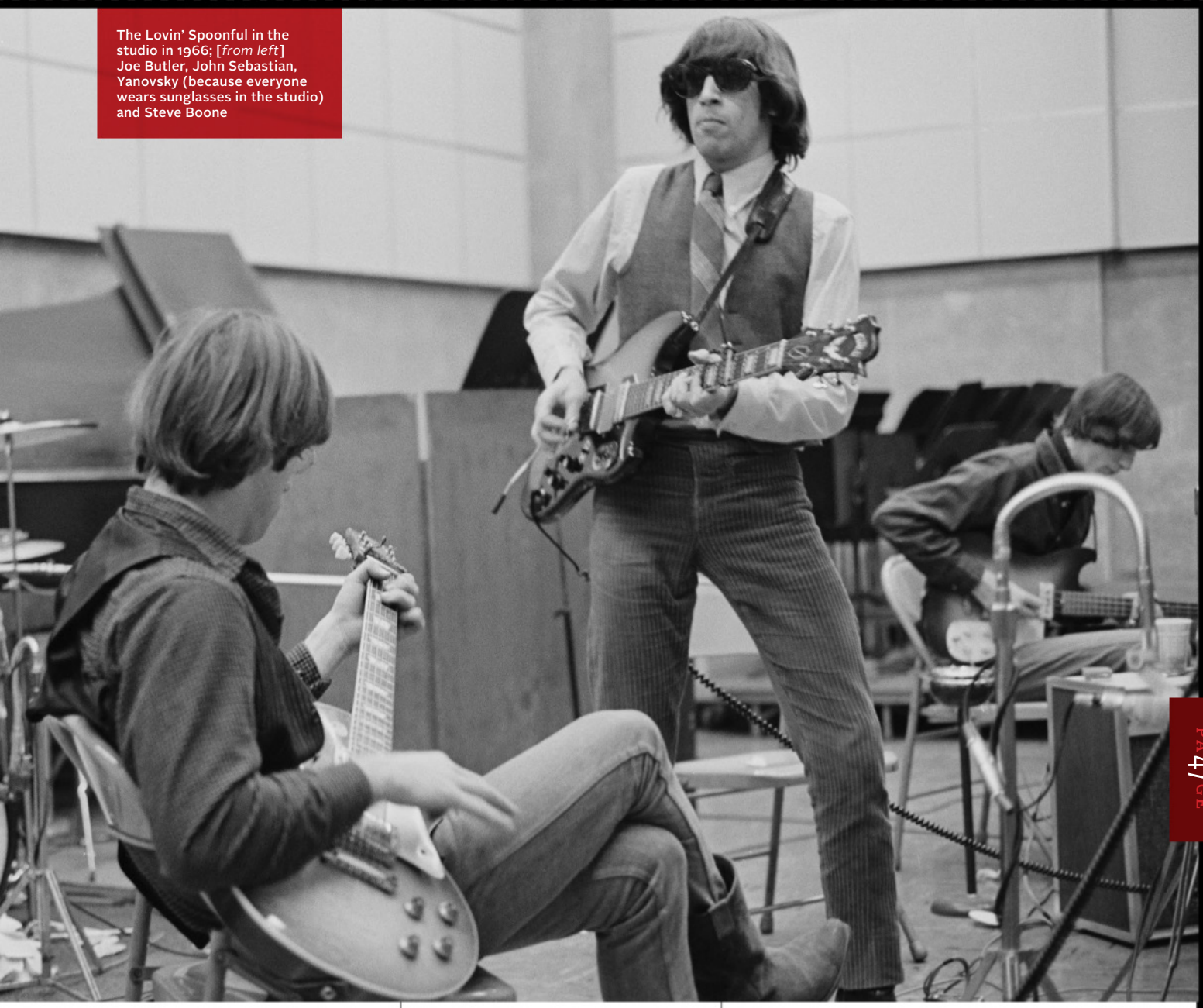
It dealt a death blow to Yanovsky's music career. The title of his 1968 solo album, *Alive and Well in Argentina (and Loving Every Minute of It)* seems to comment on his status as a pariah and exile from hippie utopia. The album, and his '68 solo single "As Long As You're Here" both sank like a stone. Yanovsky played briefly in Kris Kristofferson's band, appearing with them at the historic Isle of Wight Festival in 1970. But soon after that, he was out of the music game.



DON PAULSEN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

"I liked the music, but I didn't like the business," he later said.

Zal Yanovsky's departure from the Lovin' Spoonful also marked the band's exit from the Top 10. Without him, they'd never hit the top of the charts again. It's true that Erik Jacobsen, who'd produced all of the band's big hits and other recordings, also left the fold at this time. But without the yin/



The Lovin' Spoonful in the studio in 1966; [*from left*] Joe Butler, John Sebastian, Yanovsky (because everyone wears sunglasses in the studio) and Steve Boone

yang, Lennon/McCartney give-and-take between Sebastian and Yanovsky, the magic wasn't there to believe in any longer. Yanovsky went on to a second career as a chef and restaurateur and died of a heart attack in 2002, at age 58. While fondly remembered by rock connoisseurs (the Lovin' Spoonful were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000), his name is likely to draw only puzzled looks from members of the general public.

Volumes could be written on why Yanovsky and the Lovin' Spoonful don't enjoy the same status as other successful and stylistically important Sixties rock groups. A portion of the blame might be placed on Sebastian's embarrassing, maudlin, stoned and sloppy performance at Woodstock in 1969, which got enshrined in the 1970 movie that everyone has seen a million times. Sebastian is a phenomenal songwriter and has done much first-rate work over the years, but Woodstock was hardly his finest hour. For many, the tie-died fiasco — in which he failed to remember the words to his own song, the saccharine "Younger Generation" — became a signifier of the worst kind of self-indulgent hippy-dippy excess. And the Lovin' Spoonful have tended to be retrospectively tarred with the same brush.

Also, they were a bit too overtly folk to slot into the restrictive Abrams rock radio format of the Seventies — the somewhat circumscribed playlist that went on to forge the current popular notion of "classic rock." Folk was a mite too quirky, quaint and often left-wing political, for the Nixon years and beyond. But with the emergence of Americana as a revered genre in recent decades, Yanovsky and the group that brought him to all-too-brief fame are ripe for recontextualization and reconsideration. They are one of the great originators of Americana. It might have happened anyway without Yanovsky, but the ride wouldn't have been half as much fun.

"Zally had a flamboyant quality so different from the folkie approach to guitar," Sebastian said in a 2002 interview with *Mojo*. "He'd be mugging at the audience and crossing his eyes when he played — making it silly and making it funny and taking the wind out of all those blustery guitar players. He'd play the same thing as them, only he'd cross his eyes and stick his tongue out." GW

PANTERA GOES WYLDE

Celebrated Texas metallers PANTERA are back for a gangbuster world tour — with Black Label Society's ZAKK WYLDE filling in for the late 'n' legendary DIMEBAG DARRELL

Is it a reunion or a tribute? Who cares! If you ask Zakk, it's simply a celebration of the music, spirit and legacy of his fallen brother. Behold the fiery return of the Cowboys from Hell!

WORDS BY
JON WIEDERHORN

PHOTOS BY
DUSTIN JACK

ST. DIME

"WE'RE UP THERE CELEBRATING **DIME AND VINNIE**. THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, AND IT BRINGS JOY TO SO MANY PEOPLE"

ON DECEMBER 18, 2022, about two weeks after playing their first-ever show together since 2001, Pantera are getting ready to tear up the Knotfest Carnival stage at the Anhembi Sambadrome in São Paulo, Brazil. Minutes before showtime, the ravenous crowd cheers along to *Jackass*-style video snippets of Pantera smashing things, blowing up shit, playing practical jokes and performing mind-blowing shows in the Nineties. A projection of a silhouette of the late Dimebag Darrell — wearing a Dean guitar, fist raised in triumph — and his late brother Vinnie Paul — holding up a drumstick — fill the screens as the band takes the stage to the weird and ethereal Peter Ivers song "In Heaven (Lady in the Radiator Song)" from David Lynch's *Eraserhead*. The moment the nation has waited more than 27 years for has arrived.

"This is called 'A New Level,'" shouts vocalist Phil Anselmo, and immediately Black Label Society guitarist Zakk Wylde, Cattle Decapitation bassist Derek Engemann (who's temporarily filling in for Covid-stricken Pantera co-founder Rex Brown) and Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante blast into the chugging opening rhythm of the song as the crowd chants to the beat. Then, Wylde, armed with an orange-and-black bullseye-decorated Wylde Audio Warhammer, doubles the speed of the riff and sparks start to fly — literally and figuratively.

Turbulence and discord were obstacles for Pantera's return to the stage long before Vinnie Paul died of a heart attack in 2018. Many fans and critics have insisted that booking a "Pantera" tour that doesn't feature founding members Dimebag Darrell Abbott (who was killed onstage in 2004) and Vinnie Paul Abbott is offensive, even with the remaining Abbotts' blessings. Others claim the real offense would be to bury the band's explosive concerts along with the brothers, and that Wylde and Benante are the perfect fill-ins (not replacements) for Dime and Vinnie. Zakk and Dime were close friends and Benante was tight with Dime and Vinnie, who were big Anthrax fans and who toured together in 1998.

"To me, it's just a beautiful thing," Wylde says of the worldwide tour that includes U.S. dates opening for Metallica and headlining with Lamb of God, as well as numerous festival appearances. "Whenever we do the Experience Hendrix thing, we pay tribute to the amazing music and playing of Jimi Hendrix. And when I'm playing 'Mr. Crowley' or 'Crazy Train' with Ozzy [*Osbourne*], we're celebrating the greatness of Randy [*Rhoads*]. It's not controversial or tragic. It's about this awesome thing Pantera created — and this community of people who still enjoy it."

Seeing the revamped Pantera onstage in São Paulo (or anywhere else), it's hard to dispute Wylde's comments or talk smack about the band's gangbuster performances. This is, indeed, a beautiful thing. Throughout the São Paulo show, Wylde plays most of the crunching rhythms in a partial crouch, biceps bulging, hair swaying left and right, obscuring his face. The sound is vintage Pantera — scooped mids, crushing power chords embellished with artificial harmonics, Whammy pedal squeals and jaw-dropping solos. If you close your eyes, you can picture Dime and Vinnie up there with Phil.

Wylde worked obsessively to emulate Dime's sound and style, and if that's not enough to convince everyone that this is an act of love for the Abbotts, the guitarist's cut-off jean jacket cements the deal. It's covered with orange-and-black patches dedicated to the late Abbott brothers. There are circular patches of their faces, each partially surrounded by "St. Dime" and "St. Vinnie," respectively. A patch on Wylde's right shoulder reads "Pantera" and features a line of stars that look like a military insignia. On his back, the edges of the CFH [Cowboys from Hell] logo peek out under his studded black strap. And just in case anyone missed the message, a rounded "Pantera" patch is positioned above the back patch and the words "Cowboys from Hell" are perched below. On a more personal level, a razorblade dangles from a chain around Wylde's neck — an homage to Dime's trademark necklace, which Dime wore in homage to Judas Priest and the iconic cover of their *British Steel* album.

Zakk Wylde — photographed in L.A. in March — holding a framed Nick Bowcott photo of him and Dimebag Darrell from 2002. We'll hear more from Bowcott in a few pages...

"We're up there celebrating Dime and Vinnie. That's what this is about, and it brings joy to so many people," Wylde says, adding that playing Pantera songs is just as enjoyable for him and Benante, whose T-shirt displays a *Simpsons*-style drawing of the Abbott brothers. "For us, it's really special because we're commemorating our buddies — the guys in Pantera who we loved — and everything they did for music."

Usually, when Wylde talks to journalists, he regales them with hysterical stories about working and playing with Ozzy and Black Label Society. Frequently, he chronicles many of the madcap misadventures he enjoyed and the venues he destroyed when he was living out his rock 'n' roll fantasies. These days, he's recapping his history and relationship with the guys in Pantera and discussing the tour that many — including Vinnie Paul — thought would never happen. While he's occasionally self-deprecating and cracks a few good jokes, Wylde is absolutely reverential to everyone in Pantera and talks far less about himself than about the purpose of the reunion and Dime's groundbreaking playing. In addition to addressing how inspiring Dime's technique was to a legion of fans, he emphasizes how the insight he gained from their friendship keeps him upbeat and motivated today.

"Dime's attitude was that you should be loving and living life to its fullest every waking moment," Wylde says. "His and Vinnie's love for life was totally infectious, and whenever you were around them everything was always positive. Always."

Following decades of false rumors and dismissed press reports, the first legitimate hint that something was brewing in the Pantera camp came in July 2022, when *Billboard* reported that Anselmo and Brown were putting together a new Pantera lineup and had signed with Artist Group International to book a North American tour. When it was time to pick fill-ins for Dime and Vinnie, Wylde and Benante were the obvious choices.

Five months later, Pantera played their first show with the new lineup

at Mexico's Monterrey Metal Fest with Judas Priest. Just as fans in the U.S. were getting antsy wondering when Pantera would rock North America, Metallica announced Pantera as their opening act for a batch of shows that are likely to be some of the biggest concerts of the year. Pantera have also announced headline gigs with Lamb of God and festival appearances in Europe.

Sitting in his studio in Los Angeles a few weeks after a Black Label Society tour with Anthrax, Wylde must feel like a medal-decorated Olympic athlete about to head into his best event. Having won over any skeptics with his fiery, heartfelt performances at the late-2022 dates in Latin America — which were less a trial run and more a trial by fire — Wylde is feeling confident and relaxed. Perched before a wall of at least 35 variously colored hanging Wylde Audio Odin Barbarian and Odin Grail guitars, wearing a black ski hat and matching "1998 Black Label Society" sweatshirt (the year he formed the band) and thoughtfully stroking his viking beard, Wylde is effectively out of BLS mode and in the zone for the next round of Pantera shows, which begin in a week, with two dates at the Loud Park Festival in Osaka and Tokyo, Japan.

Black Label Society recently completed two legs of a tour with Anthrax. Did that give you an opportunity to do some jamming with drummer Charlie Benante in preparation for the Pantera tour?

No, because once you get on the road there's no time to hang out and go sightseeing. Charlie was actually thinking about it. When we did the first tour with Anthrax and Black Label, we were in Vegas having coffee in the morning and Charlie comes up to me and goes, "Zakk, you think we can get together and work on some stuff?" And I'm like, "It's not gonna happen, bro. Just stop. We'll worry about that when we go to New Orleans." And he goes, "Yeah, but while we're on tour we could get a practice room and..." And I go, "No, dude. We're not gonna get together and jam before I get up on stage with Black Label. I don't even do sound checks with Black Label. It was funny. I said, "Charlie, you're better off practicing to the records than waiting around for me to go over stuff with you."

Couldn't you have made the time to do it once or twice just to get your feet wet?

Bro, once the day gets rolling, we've got all these things to do, and before we know it we're onstage again. The running joke is — whether we're doing three or four shows in a row — as soon as we get up there and Zeppelin and Sabbath are playing over the sound system right before we go on, we'll do a cheer with the fellas and I'll go, "Didn't we just do this 20 minutes ago? It feels like we're back up onstage for the third set of the night!" So, no, man. There's no time.

How long did you rehearse in New Orleans before the first Pantera show?

We were there for almost two weeks, just so we could go over all the parts and make sure everybody knew the playbook. It worked out really great. We just made sure everything fit in the right pocket and everyone was on the same wavelength.

Was there a learning curve before you found the right groove?

Not really, because we've all been doing this for so long. I think it's the same way with anything when you're dealing with professionals. Whether it's football teams, baseball teams, bands. You got other players in there that know what they're doing and how to play the game. If you take [*wide receiver*] Jerry Rice [*who was best known for playing on the San Francisco 49ers*] and put him on the New England Patriots — so that now he's with [*former quarterback*] Tom Brady — once him and Brady go over the routes it's just like, "Okay, Tom, just throw me the ball. I'll be there." He knows the game well enough to play with anybody. It's the same with music. You learn the plays and then do what you gotta do.

Did you already know how to play all the songs?

It's so funny that people think I'd already played all these songs. On the first Anthrax/Black Label run we did, [*bassist*] Frankie Bello was like, "Zakk, you know all the parts, right?" I go, "No, I don't know any of the parts. Why would I?" It's like if Dime agreed to fill in for me doing a run with Ozzy and I asked him, "Hey, can you come up right now and play the solo to 'No More Tears,' 'Miracle Man' or 'Stillborn'?" He'd be like, "Well, I've heard the songs, but that doesn't mean I know how to play 'em. First I gotta learn 'em!" You have to practice, and you have to work on it to get everything right.

Was it easy to learn Dime's parts?

Some of them. But I had to go to YouTube for a batch of stuff if I couldn't figure it out [*See Ola Englund sidebar*]. That was definitely a massive help. And then there were still about two or three things where Rex went, "Nah, you're slightly off. Do this" — whatever it was. And I'm like, "Oh, okay. I got it now."

What was the greatest challenge?

The hardest thing wasn't learning them; it was learning the proper way to play them so they sound like Dime — because everybody's gonna play certain things their own way. I remember when I used to play [*Rush's*] "The Spirit of Radio," I learned it on the B string and the G string, and I had to do this big stretch. My guitar teacher was like, "No, no, Zakk. It's all open strings. It's on the second fret on the E and the B." That was way easier. I remember reading an article with Al Di Meola years ago, and he was saying that when he was learning all this hybrid chicken pickin' stuff, he was going, "Man, how do they do that?" There are all these string jumps and he's just using a pick [*instead of his fingers*]. He said, "Looking back on it, learning it incorrectly helped me with my

"It's so funny that people think I'd already played all these [*Pantera*] songs," Wylde says. "You have to practice, and you have to work on it to get everything right"

picking immensely." So no matter how you do it, it's really just a matter of sitting and learning it. You just work on it until you can do it and it sounds right.

What was your favorite Pantera part to learn?
The actual riff that Dime jammed on for "Cowboys from Hell" was very cool. I don't know if Dime was doing a finger exercise when he came up with that, or he was just jamming and noodling on and on the way Slash put together "Sweet Child O' Mine" — but it's a really great pattern. Speaking of Al Di Meola, it's almost like something he would do, but the way Dime presented it, it was totally metal.

A lot of people, including artists that have covered it, have played it wrong.
I mean, there's several ways you could play it and it's still the same if it sounds the same. But it's definitely a signature Dimebag lick.

Were you surprised when Metallica offered you the main opening slot on their tour — or was that in the works for a long time?
I have no idea about any of that stuff. I just show up whenever we get these dates in. It's like being a Navy Seal. You get your orders, and you go, "We gotta go kill some bad guys. Let's do it!" But no, it's great, without a doubt. We're friends with all those guys, so it'll be a good time.

Pantera formed in 1981 as teenagers. Were you a fan back when they were releasing their own albums, or did you discover them later in their career?
When we were doing the Pride and Glory stuff [*in 1994*], our drummer Brian Tichy was really into checking out new stuff. He turned me on to Pantera, Soundgarden and other cool bands. So I heard [*Pantera's*] "Walk" and "Mouth for War" and I loved them. And then I heard "I'm Broken" 'cause it was on *Headbanger's Ball*.

When did you first meet Dime?
We played the 1994 Monsters of Rock show at Castle Donington in England. Aerosmith was headlining and Extreme was on the bill. But then you had Sepultura and Pantera. We opened the show, so then we got to watch all the other bands and hang out. That's when we met all the guys in Pantera. They were awesome guys and, to me, they were the new breed.

People always ask me, "What was Dime's legacy?" I always think of Dime in the same way I think of Tony Iommi. He's just beyond — and loved, obviously. We all love King Edward [*Van Halen*] And Saint [*Randy*] Rhoads and everything they did with their chops. But I think Pantera is the benchmark for what they did with insanely heavy metal, kind of how Black Sabbath is the benchmark for hard, riff-driven stuff and just heaviness in general. As far as his riffs and his playing go, I think Dime sits at the table with Tony Iommi.

Dime didn't just play with speed and flair; he and the rest of the band were incredibly tight.
If you're talking about the sound of Pantera, a lot of that comes because of Dime's love for Eddie and Randy. The playing is rooted in precision. It's not sloppy. When you listen to punk, it's all about aggression. You're not worried about it being super tight or musically complicated. You just want the aggression, and the slop that's there is part of the flavor. But with Pantera, between Vinnie's drumming and Rex's tight basslines, along with Dime's incredible playing, which is also so tight, the band is just a fine-tuned precision instrument.

Aside from being so tight, what was Dime's greatest gift as a guitarist?
The way he played and his core choice of sounds. A lot of them are just for dissonance purposes, and it sounds dirty and nasty, and it screams, but that's the flavor you want in the soup. There's a lot of thought and planning that went into the way he chose to go from one chord to another in unexpected ways, and it totally works in every song. Everything he did worked, which is pretty incredible.

How long was it after you met Pantera at Castle Donington that you and Dime became tight?
He was super-cool to me from the start. He knew who I was because I had played with Ozzy. But really, our friendship started with us being huge fans of a lot of the same bands and talking about music. We'd always talk about the guitar players we loved and why we loved them.

There are legendary stories about you partying with Dime and tearing up shit. Is that what solidified your friendship? Or was it more a matter of being in the same industry, talking about guitarists and music?
It was a combination of everything. Between the playing, the drinking, how we matched our stilettos and our fishnets with our eyeliner and our rouge — all the typical stuff that brings fellas together. [*Laughs*]

Did you jam with Dime over the years?
No. Why would we do that? It cuts into drinking time. [*Laughs*] Let's see. We could be at an Irish pub somewhere laughing our asses off or we could be working on writing some new music. Hmmmm. I think we'll be at the Irish pub! [*Laughs*] Seriously, man. There was no time to jam. They live in Texas. I was out in California. Whenever we got together it was just to have a good time.

What's the first great drinking story you remember with Dime?
Dude, if I remembered it then it wouldn't be great. When we started hanging out, of course, we drank, but most of the time drinking with Dime would be over the phone. We talked on the phone all the time for several hours just drinking away. We'd make each other cry, we'd be laughing so hard. But every time we got together it was always hilarious — nothing but pure comedy. And sometimes we caused some mayhem.

Like what?
One time, I was down at Dime's house and it was like a lost *Weekend at Bernie's* down there. I had to make sure I got a flight home to Newark [*airport in New Jersey*] to help Barbaranne, my wife, with our two newborn kids. They were 15 months apart and they were in strollers. I end up in this drunken debacle, and of course, I miss the flight home. So Barb is with the babies and they're crying and I'm not there. So yeah, Barb wasn't a happy camper for that one. Dime smoothed that one over for me so she wouldn't yell at me too much. She's not gonna yell at Dime. He was my guardian angel on that one — my "get out of jail free" card.

There's a great story about Pantera trashing producer Terry Date's rental cars. You had a similar experience with Dime once and you wound up crashing a 4x4 through fences by the road and doing donuts on people's property, yes?
That was complete and total insanity. I thought it was a rental car the whole time and it turned out to be his buddy's truck that we trashed. [*Dime's wife*] Rita had to do some damage control and put out some fires on that one. Pretty much whatever we did — and you can see a lot of the kinds of practical jokes on the *Vulgar Videos* they released — it was all just tons of silliness and stupidity. And thank God, nobody got hurt.

Dime and Vinnie had a reputation for being extremely generous. People close to them say the Christmas parties they threw at their dad's house were legendary and guests would get showered with gifts before they left. Did Dime ever give you an amazing present for Christmas or your birthday?
Oh, man, it didn't have to be Christmas or Easter or Thanksgiving. Dime would just pop up all the time and give people gifts. If he knew you were a Judas Priest fan and he got a copy of their new box set before it came out, he would just give it to you. He was Santa Claus with a pink beard. That was one of his nicknames.

What was your favorite gift from Dime?
It would have to be the Dean guitars. I'm probably going to break out two of them on this upcoming run, which will be pretty cool.

Some say Dime and Vinnie were larger than their music. Were they larger than life?
Oh, man. If you think about them or you want to celebrate them, then treat every day like it's a Friday or Saturday night because that's what they did. Don't feel sorry for yourself for 10 minutes, five minutes, five seconds. You should not be burning about anything for even one second because that's not gonna fix anything anyway. They were always having fun and they were hysterical. They videotaped everything, and looking back it's all just Benny Hill comedy reels.

Did you ever see Dime when he was down?
No, not in person. The only time was when we used to talk on the phone back when he was starting Damageplan. He was upset about Pantera. They had worked so hard to get to where they did and then it all ended, and he basically had to start over again with Damageplan. He was like,

Wylde wearing the cut-off jean jacket he's been wearing onstage for the Pantera shows; it's covered with orange-and-black patches dedicated to the late Abbott brothers

"Zakk, what am I gonna do?" That was the only time I ever knew when he was upset or down.

What did you say to him?
I was just like, "Dude, you're like Eddie or Randy to so many kids out there. You gotta take that gift and just carry on." I had a famous shot of Randy, where he was sitting there looking into the mirror, practicing guitar. So, I sent it to Dime when he was making that Damageplan record and I said, "Whenever you're feeling down, just look at this picture for inspiration." Aside from that, he was always a powerful light and a force of positivity.

There was an incredible connection between Dime and Vinnie, and that was a big part of Pantera's chemistry. They were closer than brothers.
Yeah, well, almost. I remember telling Eddie Van Halen, "Ed, you should check out this band Pantera. Dime and Vin are kind of like you and Alex. They're brothers, and they love you guys." And he was like, "Oh, yeah? Sounds cool." But definitely, man, they were family. They were close, they had chemistry, and that's always gonna be there in the music.

Dime was your best friend. How did his death affect you?
It was definitely crazy. They had played Seattle [*on November 14, 2004*] and then they were in Ohio [*where Dime was murdered on December 8*]. They were scheduled to go to L.A. from there. Not long before the Ohio thing, I spoke to Dime and he said, "I'll see you in about two weeks!" And I went, "Alright, cool, man. We'll all have a good time." And then, suddenly, we're in fuckin' bizarre land. I was going to see him soon and suddenly... It was just weird. I remember talking to Vinnie when we were down in Australia in 2014, and he said, "Zakk, I can't believe it. My brother's almost been gone for 10 years." I said, "Yeah, I know. It's crazy, man. It's just crazy." And now Vinnie's [*been*] gone [*for almost five years*]. It just goes to show you how every day is a gift. It really is. Not that you need to see your friends pass away to realize how precious life is. But it's the truth. Every day is a gift.

There were reports back in 2014 that You, Phil and Rex wanted to play a reunion tour with Vinnie.
I told Vinnie and the fellas, "If you guys ever wanted to do it, of course I would be there for you to support you and to support Dime. Just tell me what I need to learn and I'll learn it." There were all these conversations circling around.

How close did it come to happening?
I think it was pretty close, but you'd have to ask Phil and Rex exactly what happened — whether they got into an argument or something — I don't know. I'm friends with all of those guys, and I said, "It's none of my business. I'm just here for you if you want me involved."

Do you know if Vinnie ever made peace with Phil?
I have no idea where Vinnie was with Phil back then. Like I said, I don't get involved with that stuff. I'm not saying this [*group of performers*] is Pantera. I just want to honor Dime and the band. It's like asking Eric Clapton, 'If Mitch [*Mitchell*] and Noel [*Redding*] said, "Would you honor Jimi and go out and play and sing with us?," of course Clapton's gonna say yes. It's not even a matter of saying yes. You *have* to do this. So if they ask you to do it, you do it.

Considering how much bad blood there was for so long, how did this finally end up happening? How did you get involved in what has turned out to be the greatest possible tribute to Pantera?
It was easy. Phil called me up and said, "Hey, Zakky, you want to go out and honor Dime and Vinnie?" And I was like, "Yeah, when do you want to do it?" And that was it. We talked about it for a while and then we all got on a group chat and talked about what songs we were gonna do and the tunings and everything like that.

What's the highlight for you in terms of doing these songs?
Just keeping them alive and paying tribute to Dime and Vinnie and Pantera. I just look at it this way. I [*imagine*] Dime and Vinnie are with us and we're at the House of Blues, and we say, "Wait 'til you see this early birthday present we got you guys." And they're figuring it's gonna be the ultimate Kiss tribute band because they love Kiss. The curtain opens up, and it's me and Charlie playing their stuff with Rex and Phil! They'd be going, "I can't believe what I'm seeing right now!" They'd be on the floor crying, laughing, high-fiving each other, going, "This is hilarious. The guys actually took the time to learn our stuff." I know they'd be having the best time. And I can just hear Dime saying, "Holy shit, Zakk bought a Whammy pedal for this!"

Do you ever feel Dime and Vinnie's presence?
All the time. And it's so crazy because when we started talking about doing this thing, there would be constant reminders about it wherever I went. I told Barb, "Dime is willing this thing to happen. He wants this to happen." I'd just get constant reminders of him all the time, whether it was a picture or something on my phone, or I'd be driving and I'd see a Pantera license plate or a "333" somewhere — that was Dime's lucky number. I was literally going, "He's watching and he's here with me."

Dimebag Darrell at Castle Donington in the U.K. in 1994. "We got to watch all the other bands and hang out. That's when we met the guys in Pantera," Wylde says

MARTYN GOODACRE/GETTY IMAGES

Dimebag was a guitar hero. You're a guitar hero. But no matter who you are, it's hard to step into someone else's shoes — especially when there are people out there who don't want that. Was there ever a moment when you thought it would be too hard physically or emotionally to get up there and play Pantera songs?
When Pantera released *Far Beyond Driven*, I asked Dime why he wrote such aggressive riffs, and if he's a really angry person inside. He said, "Dude, I'm not angry about anything." I realized Dime and Vinnie were literally the Van Halen side of the band — exciting, energetic and always ready for a good time — and Phil's lyrics and vocals made the music darker and more vicious. And the contrast was amazing.

When you look at the bands we love — whether it's the Beatles, the Stones, Zeppelin, Sabbath, Cream — when you look at them, every one of them had this special chemistry. With Van Halen, you got Eddie and then you got Dave [*Lee Roth*]. And it's just a perfect combination. But if you took John Bonham and put him in Black Sabbath, and you took Bill Ward and put him in Led Zeppelin, you'd have two completely different bands. And then imagine putting Robert Plant in Black Sabbath and Ozzy in Led Zeppelin. Completely different. When you talk about all these amazing musicians we love, if you mixed and matched them, it's crazy to think of what the outcomes might have been like. Pantera were four guys that were a perfect fit for each other — all of them — when they came to the table and made that soup. And for a while it was the best of all possible worlds. GW

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FAR BEYOND DRIVEN

THE INIMITABLE ZAKK WYLDE DISCUSSES HIS THOUGHTS, HIS APPROACH AND HIS GEAR AS HE HONORS HIS MUCH-MISSED FRIEND WITH REVERENCE AND RESPECT

ZAKK WYLDE IS not only one of the finest metal guitarists to ever grace this planet; he's always been an open book when it comes to expressing his deep love, plus his profound reverence and respect for his dear friend, the late Dimebag Darrell. Yes sir, Zakk literally wears his heart on his sleeve. Which is why every Black Label Society show since 2005 has featured "In This River" — the emotion-laden ballad Zakk wrote for Dime — complete with large, backline-covering images of his beloved friend. And, ever since Darrell's brother, Vinnie Paul, sadly passed away in 2018, his picture also graces the BLS set during said song. "Those are our buddies, man," Zakk says in an unusually soft but searingly sincere tone. "That song and their images will never, ever leave the Black Label set."

WORDS BY NICK BOWCOTT

PHOTO BY DUSTIN JACK

ST. DIME
Black Label Society
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The heartfelt words Wylde wrote in his popular *Guitar World* column, "Brewtality," in early 2005 sum up his feelings for Darrell as a player and a person. "In my mind Dime was, without question, the best metal guitarist in the world — you've got Jimi Hendrix, you've got Eddie Van Halen, you've got Jimmy Page, you've got Randy Rhoads, you've got Tony Iommi, and you've got Dimebag Darrell. He belongs in those hallowed ranks without any shadow of a doubt.

"On top of his talent, though, Dime was also a beautiful guy. He was totally devoid of ego, as genuine as the day is long, and also the kindest person I've ever met. Every time he walked into a room; he'd light it up like the ray of sunshine he was. Dime was an angel that the good Lord sent down to brighten our lives and make us happy, but now he needs him, so he's taken him back. I never had a brother, but Dime was as close to blood as possible, and my love for him was, is and always will be beyond unconditional and forever. The bottom line is this: Dime's influence will be felt forever, and his memory will never, ever die. He lives on in every guitarist's veins 'cause that's what guitar playing is: one big brotherhood."

And speaking of brotherhood, nearly 20 years later Zakk is now playing guitar on the Pantera tribute/celebration tour alongside Dime's bandmates Philip Anselmo and Rex Brown with Anthrax's Charlie Benante on drums. At every show, Wylde wears a denim vest featuring large "St. Dime" and "St. Vinnie" patches on its front.

Like I said, Zakk definitely wears his heart on his sleeve — or perhaps I should say, his chest.

One of the last times the two of us were together with Dime was for the "Booze Brothers" private guitar lesson that was part of *Guitar World's* March 2003 issue. In it, you said hearing a great player inspired you "to wanna practice 24/7, and it still does to this day." When you were learning Dime's guitar parts for the Pantera shows, what aspects of his playing inspired you?

Every single note, Father Nick — every single note! [*Laughs*] In addition to the hits like "Walk," "I'm Broken," "Cowboys" and "This Love," we also do some deeper tracks like "Yesterday Don't Mean Shit" [Reinventing the Steel], "Strength Beyond Strength" and "Use My Third Arm" [*both from* Far Beyond Driven]. While I was learning them, I realized a lot of the chord changes and note choices Dime would make were pretty dissonant — just for the flavor of the soup, if ya know what I mean. I kept thinking, "Wow, that was interesting. I would've never made that chord change or gone to that note; I wonder why he chose to go there for this section." And obviously, some of Dime's chord voicings are really interesting too. He used a lot

of root/major 3rd, root/minor 3rd and inverted chords instead of just playing a normal root/5th power chord. It's definitely been a very cool experience.

Dime also incorporated a lot of chromatic movement and blues bends, which, alongside the traits you've just mentioned, helped add extra tension, excitement and darkness to a riff or chord sequence.

Without a doubt. There are definitely certain little bits of trickery and some Doug Henning [*a famous Canadian magician who passed away in 2000*] magical things going on in Dime's stuff. Rex showed me a couple of things I wasn't 100 percent sure about, like when Dime goes to G♯ in "Becoming" instead of a G, which is what a lot of people think he played, and I was like, "What sort of sorcery is this?!" [*Laughs*]

It's all about adding Tabasco sauce or whatever type of flavoring you want — whether it's cilantro or sour cream. It all depends on what you're writing and what you're aiming for. It's like Tony Iommi putting the flat five in there because it makes a riff sound darker. Whereas Jimmy Page would sometimes use the major 3rd [*hums the interlude riff of "Bring It on Home" from* Led Zeppelin II], which is more of an uplifting thing. There is no right, and there is no wrong.

How did you approach learning Dime's riffs and solos?

I learned Dime's stuff the same exact way I do when I play with Ozzy, Zakk Sabbath, Generation Axe [*with Steve Vai, Yngwie Malmsteen, Nuno Bettencourt and Tosin Abasi*] or the Experience Hendrix stuff. You've just gotta sit down, do the work and learn how to play the song and solos — whether they're by Saint Dime, Saint Randy, Lord Iommi or Saint Jimi, plus of course, Jake [*E. Lee*]. It's no different. There's a big difference between listening to and loving a song and actually being able to play it. You've just gotta put in the time and work — there's no iPhone app for that, brother! [*Laughs*]

Did you do it the "old school" way by listening to Pantera's albums with guitar in hand, or did you use transcriptions and videos?

> "I LEARNED DIME'S STUFF THE SAME EXACT WAY I DO WHEN I PLAY WITH OZZY, ZAKK SABBATH, GENERATION AXE OR THE EXPERIENCE HENDRIX STUFF. **YOU'VE JUST GOTTA SIT DOWN, DO THE WORK** AND LEARN HOW TO PLAY THE SONG AND SOLOS"

I did all of the above, including watching YouTube and everything like that. I remember checking out some videos by Ola [*Englund — see overleaf*] just from Googling "how to play" certain Pantera songs. Back in the day, you'd ask your friends if you couldn't figure something out. Like I call you up and go, "Nick, you worked with Dime on his *Guitar World* column; what's he doing on this section? I can't make it out." But nowadays you can just go on YouTube and find some slamming player who'll show you how to play Eddie's tapping part in "Eruption" or whatever. So I definitely did a lot of that.

I imagine the rehearsal boot camps were invaluable. Playing newly learned songs along with the recorded versions is one thing, but performing them in a band situation is a completely different beast, especially when they're Pantera songs.

Rehearsing those songs with the fellas is obviously really important; the training wheels are definitely off at that point! [*Laughs*] Like you said, playing along with the album is one thing, but being able to play those same exact songs by yourself or with other players is completely different. It's like trying to drive someplace you've been before but without your car's GPS. Good luck with that!

For me it's a matter of retaining everything: learning all the parts and then remembering how many times they're repeated before moving on to the next one. I deliberately write Black Label stuff as caveman as possible. But, as you and I know, a lot of Pantera's material ain't like that at all; it's definitely not meat-and-potatoes-type stuff! Once again, you've gotta put the time and work in. There is no substitute for that, and there are no shortcuts. You can't avoid it, Father Nick... you've just got to go to your room and do your homework like a good boy! [*Laughs*]

And then, of course, there are those stellar solos.

Dime's solos are like prime steaks: ribeye, filet, porterhouse, sirloin, New York strip... They're all different and they're all great, so bring them all on! It's kind of like the Ozzy thing, because for me they're all fun to play. Obviously, I love doing Randy's leads, but I also get to play the [*Jake E. Lee*] solo in "Bark at the Moon," which is amazing too. With Dime's leads it's the exact same thing. I mean, we start the set with "A New Level," and Dime was just shredding through the whole solo — and that's right out of the gate! Obviously, his solos in songs like "Walk" and "This Love" are "Mr. Crowley"-type leads where you have to play them the way it is on the record. They're songs within songs, straight from the Saint Rhoads school of song and solo writing.

To quote Dime from "The Booze Brothers" private lesson you guys did together in the March 2003 *GW*, "When it comes to leads, Zakk plays a pretty hardcore right-hand game. He picks a hell of a lot more than I do, whereas I tend to slur a lot more than he does. Both approaches are equally cool, though; they just have a different attack and feel." Did you find that learning his solos made you change your usual picking approach in certain places?

As far as picking technique and stuff, I'm more staccato whereas Dime's more legato. That's just the way I play. That said, there are certain parts where it *has* to be legato, so you just do it, otherwise you're not going to get that sound. If Saint [*Allan*] Holdsworth wanted to pick every note, he could have, but it wouldn't have given him the flavor of soup he was looking for. He wanted it to sound breathy, like a saxophone, not staccato.

Due to your unique playing style and approach, at the end of the day, you're always going to sound like you and, in my humble opinion, that's a wonderful thing.

Without a doubt, and that's the beauty of the guitar. Stevie Ray Vaughan playing "Voodoo Child" sounds like Stevie Ray Vaughan playing "Voodoo Child" — he has such a unique touch, sound and style, he just can't help it! It's the same thing as hearing Randy playing Black Sabbath stuff — it sounds like him and it's awesome.

I spoke with Ola [*Englund*] and Grady [*Champion, Dime's guitar tech*] for this issue and, like me, they both feel Darrell would've loved the fact that you're honoring

NICK BOWCOTT

Nick Bowcott was on hand — in Arlington, Texas, in late 2002 — as Zakk and Dimebag were photographed for the March 2003 *Guitar World*. For more about that issue, see page 68

him by playing his songs and solos "the Zakk way." And, just like you playing his material with Phil, Rex and Charlie, I'm sure Dime would be totally reverent to what you recorded but play it in his own unique, inimitable style.
Yeah, without a doubt. All the notes in the "No More Tears" solo would be right, but it would still sound like Dime playing because it would have his touch — you couldn't escape that, and you wouldn't want to. That's the beauty of it; it would be his interpretation of the parts he learned.

I noticed that in all the footage and photos I've seen of the first six South American shows, it looked like you were only using one guitar, a Wylde Audio Warhammer tuned down to C♯ and armed with a Floyd Rose plus your usual EMG 81/85 pickups.
I just used one guitar through the whole show for that first run. That was it — plug in and off we go!

I know Dime gave you some guitars; can we expect to see any of those making an appearance at any of the upcoming shows?
I definitely want to bring them out, but I didn't want to travel with them on a lot of flights like we were doing in South America. I was like, "Man, if these things disappear, I'll be pretty bummed out." The guitars Dime gave me are literally "one of one." There are no replicas, and even if there were, the whole special part of it would be me bringing the real thing out on stage.

From what I can gather, the rig you've been using thus far mainly consists of the usual amps, cabs and pedals you normally use.
That's right, I'm using the rig I use with Black Label, Ozzy, Zakk Sabbath, Experience Hendrix and Generation Axe — my Wylde Audio tops, my Marshall cabinets and my usual pedalboard. Because Dime used solid-state amps in Pantera and I use tube stuff, I wasn't sure if it would sound right. So when I was getting ready to rehearse with the fellas, I was thinking of finding out what Randall heads Dime used and then buying a whole bunch of them on Reverb or eBay. But when we got down to rehearsals, I used my rig and it worked out just fine. Obviously, I had to get a [*DigiTech*] Whammy pedal for "Becoming," so I'm now the proud owner of one of those. And I had to get noise gates too because I don't use them. I just Googled "best noise gates" and the Dunlop one [*Dunlop MXR Smart Gate Noise Gate M135*] came up so I bought a couple. Those pedals are amazing; I can stand right in front of my rig with it screaming pure lightning and it doesn't feed back when I'm playing stuff like "5 Minutes Alone," "Walk" or the verse riff in "Cowboys." There's nothing, just silence.

Those gates definitely do their job, and that "silence" is such a huge part of the Dimebag soup. I mean, with Dime there was never enough distortion! [*Laughs*] He just wanted his tone as massively distorted as possible without having to turn down; that was a big part of Dime's sound.

Do you dial in your amps differently for the Pantera shows?
No. It's just balls to the wall. Thank the good Lord and John Paul II for those noise gates, though. Without those bad boys I wouldn't be able to get through the Pantera show; I'd be tap dancing on my pedalboard like I was in *Riverdance*, switching my OD pedal on and off all the time! [*Laughs*]

Zakk Wylde — with Pantera's *Cowboys from Hell* logo behind him — performs December 9, 2022, at Complejo El Campin in Bogotá, Colombia

You pretty much leave your overdrive pedal switched on the whole time, right? It's an integral part of your sound.
It's always on except for in "This Love" and "Planet Caravan," where I just turn the pedal off, turn the volume on my guitar down and there's my clean sound. I don't channel-switch or anything like that, I never have. I just use stompboxes right into single-channel heads. There's fewer things that can go wrong with a simple setup like mine.

In addition to your long-serving guitar tech, Stephen Murillo, you've also got Dime's wingman, Grady Champion, working with you on the Pantera shows.
Yeah, Grady's part of the show. He's back there in the kitchen cooking

GUILLERMO LEGARIA SCHWEIZER/GETTY IMAGES (ZAKK) COURTESY OF OLA ENGLUND

things up, getting things ready, operating the Whammy pedal, tweaking the gates and stuff like that — just like he did with Dime.

A lot of people have been commenting on how your arms have been looking impressively chiseled of late. I'm asking for a friend — what's the story there?
The music business isn't what it used to be, so now I'm doing a part-time gig at Chippendales! I've been giving Barb lap dances as well, so I'm making money on the side doing that. A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do!

With several shows already under your belt and many more to come, what are your thoughts and takeaways from the Pantera experience so far?
I always knew Dime was great, but now [*that*] I've really studied a bunch of his songs and solos, he's even greater-er-er than I even realized. He definitely sits at the table with his heroes and breathes the same rarified air as Tony Iommi because, just like Black Sabbath, Pantera created a genre of music; they were the precision machine that's still considered its benchmark to this day. It's not just about Dime's chops and how great his technique was; it's about what he created. That's his legacy — and it's way, way bigger than just being a great lead player.

Also, Pantera's music is so powerful and special; it's perfectly designed for live shows and festivals — it really is. The crowd reactions have been just insane. Dime and Vinnie would definitely be loving it — seeing what they were a part of and what they created.

As you and I know, every day with Dime and Vinnie was Friday or Saturday night. They enjoyed life to the fullest. So, I always tell everybody this: if you want to celebrate Dime and Vinnie, you should be thankful every single day and kick as much ass as you possibly can! I enjoyed many Dimebag debacles that got me in the doghouse with the wife! [*Laughs*] And then I'd always have to send him in to talk with her to smooth things out — 'cause I knew she wasn't going to yell at Dime 'cause he was such a charming sweetheart of a guy!

At the end of the day, I'm far beyond honored that I got asked to help to celebrate the incredible greatness of Saint Dime and Saint Vinnie. I guess you could say I'm on a mission from God, just like Jake and Elwood! [*Laughs*] Joking aside, we're just four friends celebrating our buddies' memory and the amazing thing they created that brings so many people joy and happiness — just like their heroes did. That's why we still listen to Randy, Eddie, Sabbath, Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix *and* Pantera — because it brings you to your happy place. It's a beautiful thing and to me, every show we've done in honor of Dime and Vinnie has been beyond special. Far beyond... GW

BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME SOLO?

WHEN ZAKK WYLDE NEEDED A HAND WITH SOME OF DIMEBAG'S GUITAR PARTS, WHERE DID HE TURN? TO OLA ENGLUND'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL, OF COURSE

IN THE VAST ocean of metal content that lurks within YouTube, Swedish six-stringer Ola Englund (the Haunted, Feared) is a major force, and deservedly so. He's also a huge Pantera fan — and many of his Dime-centric videos have amassed impressive views. In fact, they're so good that Zakk Wylde watched some of them when learning parts for the current Pantera celebration tour. "It's funny to hear that a player I look up to would even bother checking out my stupid videos," Englund says. "It's come full circle in a way... Dimebag was my first real guitar hero. I heard the riff for 'Walk' when I was 15, and that was it. Best guitar tone and riff I've heard! I busted my ass that summer to be able to buy a Washburn Blackjack when I turned 16. There was no turning back after that."

What are your thoughts on the Pantera celebration tour and lineup?
Like a lot of people who love Pantera, when I first heard about it, it felt like a double-edged sword. I was like, "But you can't do it without Dimebag and Vinnie — Dimebag and Vinnie *are* Pantera." But, at the same time, Phil and Rex are also 50 percent of Pantera. Plus, as a fan, I felt this was the closest I'd get to seeing my favorite band again. You can be a gatekeeper, but we also need to keep the legacy of Pantera alive, the legacy of Dime and Vinnie. The best way to do that is to pay tribute to the brothers.

When I heard the lineup with Charlie [*Benante*] and Zakk, I felt, "That's the right way to do it." I'd probably say it's the only way to do it. As a fan, and I'm speaking for 15-year-old Ola here, Zakk is the only option. I don't want to see anybody else. Knowing Zakk and Dime were such good friends and that they spent so much time together, there's no one else who can do this like he can.

A lot of people have said you should be playing guitar in the Pantera tribute.
I'm extremely flattered by that, but no! It has to be Zakk. He's the guy. He's the rock star. There are plenty of guys who can play Dimebag guitar on YouTube, but they're not rock stars; they can't handle those shoes. Zakk can. Also, I want to see the band — I don't want to be up there! I want to be in the pit listening to that stuff being played live again; 15-year-old Ola has been longing for this. I can't wait!

— Nick Bowcott

DIMEBAG'S CHAMPION

GRADY CHAMPION, DIME'S FRIEND AND GUITAR TECH, TALKS ABOUT THE PANTERA CELEBRATION SHOWS — AND HIS ROLE IN THE MAELSTROM

BY NICK BOWCOTT

Grady Champion at a Pantera show in the Nineties

[*right*] Dime (pre-pink beard!) and Grady

IN THE PANTERA-loving metal community, Grady Champion needs no introduction. As far as the fans are concerned, he's an integral part of the larger-than-life Pantera family. Although Grady continued to be a much-in-demand guitar tech long after Pantera effectively disintegrated in 2001, he retired from the road not so long ago — or so he thought.

"You know me, Nick — I was totally over and done with touring," Grady says. "Now I'm back out there for Darrell... with permission from my wife and kids, of course!" [*Laughs*]

In fact, when Grady announced he was joining the crew for the Pantera celebration shows, many fans were overjoyed as they felt his involvement added further credibility and credence to an already exciting venture.

"I got a little worried when I made that Facebook post about me going out — and it almost immediately hit Blabbermouth and all that shit," Grady says. "I was like, 'What the fuck, dude? You don't have anything better to write about?' It made me a little uneasy, but I guess it's a thing and I'm incredibly humbled that people think I add credibility to it. I'm sure my name adds more than my guitar-tech wizardry does, though; I'm no Drew Foppe [*Deftones, Shinedown tech*], that's for sure!"

When you first turned up to the rehearsals in late 2022, how did you feel?

It was weird. Because I did shows for so long after Pantera, half of me was in "It's just another show" mode. But then when I started absorbing what was actually going on, the gravity of it would start to hit me and I'd be trying my damndest to get back to being "show mode" guy. It was a pretty mixed bag.

Was there a moment when you realized the shows weren't just going to be good, but great?

Yeah. It happened when we had full production going on. They started "Planet Caravan" and I went out front so I could soak in the whole vibe. I sat on a couch watching them play while the tribute video came on and I just started crying really hard — not just tearing up and stuff, but uncontrollable sobbing for at least 30 seconds. I literally couldn't stop myself.

Things changed for me after that. It was always a good vibe with everybody at rehearsals up to then, but it wasn't "the full Monty." That was definitely a defining moment. I'll not forget that one. When everyone was leaving, I just grabbed Zakk, hugged him and went, "Thank you, man. Thank you so fucking much for doing this and representing your brother — it means so much." He just looked at me like I was crazy and smiled as if to say, "You don't gotta thank me, bro. I know why I'm here." All I could say was, "You don't have any idea what this means to me. I guess I'm basically thanking you for myself."

I know how much doing this for Dime means to Zakk, and it's palpable.

JOE GIRON (LEFT) COURTESY OF GRADY CHAMPION (RIGHT)

You can see it in his face and the way he does stuff. You can see his passion, his "want" to be there, and his deep love and respect for Darrell — and that's the reason I'm there too. It's really refreshing to know why Zakk's there.

He comes in every single day, laser focused, ready to work with a "Let's do this, let's kill this" attitude. It's amazing to me; there's no wavering with the guy. He comes walking up to the stage, we hug, I put the Ultimate Warrior next to Godzilla, we all high-five and then, man, he just goes to work. He's having fun while giving it everything he's got and then some. Zakk's an awesome, all-around dude and I'm so thankful I've had the opportunity to do this again.

There were some rumors about Zakk possibly using some of Dime's backline gear, but outside of a few effects, that doesn't appear to be the case.

I heard that one too! [*Laughs*] I actually did make a Dime rig that I took to New Orleans for rehearsals. I hooked it up for a little bit, Zakk tried it, and he was like, "Bro, I don't know." I also tried one of Dime's MXR Six Band [*graphic*] EQs in his signal chain, but that didn't work for him either. He was super cool about everything; he's just gonna do Zakk. Imagine that! [*Laughs*]

> "IT'S AWESOME TO BE PART OF THE TEAM AND **IN THE PANTERA FAMILY AGAIN**. I FEEL REALLY GOOD ABOUT BEING OUT THERE; IT'S A GREAT VIBE WITH EVERYBODY"

To misquote a BLS song, there are no phony smiles or fake hellos with Mr. Wylde.

You always know exactly where you stand with Zakk. It's black or white — there's no gray area with the dude. That's one of the many reasons I love him.

We did add a few things to his signal chain, but when all's said and done, Zakk's out there to represent Dime and his music, and not be a Dime clone, 'cause he's not. He's Zakk, and he's out there on that stage representing his brother, paying homage to the brothers, and giving it 333 percent. That's all that matters to me, and it couldn't be cooler. I hate all those internet "experts" expecting Zakk to clone Dime note for note, sound exactly like him, use his guitars, blah, blah, blah. So many people think that's the way to go, but it's not. That's not what this celebration is all about. It's having fun, playing Pantera's music to a crowd and doing it your way. People have to understand it's a tribute, it's a celebration, and he's there for the brothers.

Zakk's got enough fame and he's also got a bunch of other irons in the fire. The fact he's put it all on hold to do Pantera is an amazing tribute to Dime and Vinnie. He's doing what he wants to do and it's totally genuine. There isn't anyone Dime would rather have doing this, either. And he'd want Zakk to play like Zakk because of the mutual respect those two had for each other as players and as people. What's funny is the few people I've seen who can supposedly do Dime note for note still miss the mark for me. Even if you're nailing every riff and solo note for note, in time and at the right tempo, I can always tell. People think they've got it nailed, and I'm like, "Yeah, it's good, but it's not Darrell."

Zakk's made other sacrifices to do this too, like when it comes to me doing stuff for him while he's playing. He's always done all his effects switching; he's never had anybody controlling anything. So for him to have me switching and changing stuff back there, that's a huge adjustment for him. He's just gotta have complete faith and go, "Hey, I'm out here jamming — I hope Grady gets it!"

With Dime you'd control his Whammy pedal, ride his noise gate for him and also tweak the MXR Flanger/Doubler while he was on stage. I'm guessing you're doing the same for Zakk?

Yeah. As well as the Whammy pedal, I've got a flanger, a chorus and two gates running back there. Whenever Zakk divebombs, I stick the [*MXR*] EVH Flanger on it, which adds a really cool growl. I'll hit the pedal's EVH button [*the one that duplicates Van Halen's "Unchained" setting*] whenever we're doing bombs, but sometimes I'll manually adjust the Rate and Width knobs to where it does a trill effect for a song like "I'm Broken," or a faster police-siren-type sound.

I used to just fuck around with Dime on the [*MXR*] Flanger/Doubler and make him laugh, and that's basically what I'm doing with Zakk too. I'm back there having fun, while he's out there on stage doing the exact same thing. Every so often, Zakk will look at me and smile, and I'm thinking, "Have a good time out there, brother — I've gotcha."

The chorus pedal is the same MXR [*Wylde*] one Zakk always uses. Actually, I've got two of them back there. One is for his main [*stereo*] chorus sound; I don't touch that one because that's part of Zakk's tone. I use the other chorus pedal for stuff like "This Love" and to add some flair in certain places. I put the depth all the way up and a slow burn on the rate, just to fatten it up even more. The only thing we're not doing that I did for Dime is reverb. There's no reverb because Zakk's out there with his own delay [*MXR Carbon Copy*].

The gates are the [*MXR*] M135 Smart Gates, and I've got one in front, right after the wireless switchers, and one in the back. Zakk often stands with his volume knob wide open and his overdrive pedal on when it's quiet, so the gate on the front end shuts his EMGs up, because Pantera is tight and quiet in those spots.

It sounds like you're having a total blast while working your tail off.

It's awesome to be part of the team and in the Pantera family again. I feel really good about being out there; it's a great vibe with everybody. I also feel like something of a father figure to a lot of the new crew guys too, and I must admit I get into "dad mode" real easily: [*Laughs*] "Don't stress on it, son; we'll get it done and then we're gonna have a great rock show!" GW

TECH TALK

A QUICK ZAKK WYLDE RIG RUNDOWN WITH **STEPHEN MURILLO**, ZAKK'S GUITAR TECH FOR THE PAST DECADE

BY NICK BOWCOTT

"I'D SAY 95 percent of Zakk's rig with Pantera is what he records and tours with all the time," says Stephen Murillo, Zakk Wylde's longtime guitar tech. "Zakk has a signature sound, and everyone knows it. So wherever he goes, that's what he brings. When you see him live, he gives you exactly what you're expecting."

Here's the gear Wylde has been using for the Pantera shows so far:

- Two 100-watt Wylde Audio tube heads (one black vinyl, one white) running in stereo via an MXR ZW38 Black Label Chorus
- 4x12 cabinets with Electro-Voice EVM12L Black Label speakers
- Shure Axient wireless system

- **PEDALS ON ZAKK'S BOARD** Dunlop ZW45 Zakk Wylde Wah, Dunlop ZW357 Zakk Wylde Rotovibe, MXR ZW90 Zakk Wylde Phase, MXR ZW44 Zakk Wylde Overdrive and MXR Carbon Copy Delay

- **PEDALS BEING USED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE PANTERA SHOWS** DigiTech Whammy, Dunlop MXR EVH117 Flanger and two MXR Smart Gates

- **GUITARS** Wylde Audio models tuned to C♯ (low to high: C♯, F♯, B, E, G♯, C♯) with EMG 81/85 pickups and a Floyd Rose

- **STRINGS** Dunlop .10 -.52 (.10, .13, .17, .32, .42, .52)

"Zakk controls all the pedals on his board," Murillo says. "The MXR EVH Flanger sits on the rig, and Grady likes to use that during flourishes and dive-bombs. It's an amazing sound when you hit it just right; it sounds like a growling tiger. The Whammy sits near the rig, just after all the other pedals, and we — Grady and I — operate that one for him. The only other change we've made is we needed to implement noise gates, because the very stop-start style of Dimebag warrants it."

As for working alongside Grady Champion? "It's been lovely," Murillo says. "Grady is a really special guy. He's really welcoming, selfless and helpful. He brings a lot to the table with his knowledge and experience — plus the whole Pantera vibe itself, as it quite literally lives within him. When we're working together, I'm just trying to receive and absorb the kind of energy he brings. He's all in to make the show a success, no matter what."

"ZAKK HAS A SIGNATURE SOUND, **AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT.** SO WHEREVER HE GOES, THAT'S WHAT HE BRINGS"

[*right*] Stephen Murillo [*far left, in vest*], Wylde and another amigo strap on the feedbag

[*above*] Wylde in action in Bogotá, Colombia, December 9, 2022

GUILLERMO LEGARIA SCHWEIZER/GETTY IMAGES (ZAKK) COURTESY OF STEPHEN MURILLO (MURILLO/ZAKK)

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20 YEARS GONE

IN THIS EXCERPT FROM OUR INTERVIEW WITH ZAKK AND DIME FROM OUR MARCH 2003 ISSUE, THE DUO SCREAM OUT FOR MORE GUITAR SOLOS IN MODERN ROCK AND PREDICT THE RISE OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF SHREDDERS

BY DAN EPSTEIN

Another one of Nick Bowcott's "fly on the wall" photos from the March 2003 *Guitar World* cover shoot; the actual cover photo [*right*] was taken by Matthew Salacuse

[*facing page*] Dimebag in action with Pantera in 1994

***GW*'s readers have voted Zakk Wylde Most Valuable Player and Zakk and Dimebag Darrell the Best Metal Guitarists for 2002.**

DIMEBAG DARRELL: I say thanks a million, right out of the chute. And I just want to say that Zakk Wylde is easily the best, most well-rounded player in every category, and he wholeheartedly deserves the Most Valuable Player award, hands down. He's the hardest-workin' motherfucker in rock 'n' roll, period. He does double duty — he does Black Label, he does Ozzy. He's been nonstop since he showed his face in the first place, and he keeps taking it to a new level. He's done scared everybody else off, so nobody else is even gonna try, you know? [*Laughs*]

ZAKK WYLDE: The first time I heard Pantera, I thought, Jesus Christ! I still think that, to this day, Pantera is the heaviest band on the planet, but it's not just heavy for the sake of bein' heavy; it's got groove to it, and it's pure musicianship at the same time. And what I'd say about Dime is, you can't get that good unless you work at it. You can tell he put the hours in and the practice in and drew from so many of the great players. You surround yourself with greatness — the Randy Rhoadses, the Van Halens, the Tony Iommis — and you'll be in the right ballpark. Or the right ZIP Code, anyways!

DIME: Maybe that's kinda what ties us in — we come from pretty much the exact same school.

ZAKK: When I was growin' up, to be the big gun on the block you had to know how to play Randy's stuff, Eddie's shit or anybody that was cool. I mean, I'm not a big Dokken fan, but I'll tell you right now: George Lynch can throw down. It wasn't like super-heavy metal shit, but you listened to George Lynch's solos, his vibrato and everything, and it was like, "What the fuck's he doing?" Me and Dime came up at the end of the Eighties, when all that stuff was kind of fizzling out.

DIME: [*Laughs*] The three-handed technique was goin' out of style!

ZAKK: Guitar, with Yngwie and everything like that, kind of hit a ceiling where it couldn't go any further and had to start over again. And that's when GNR came out, and Slash brought it back to more feel and more rock 'n' roll, you know? Which was awesome. And then, of course, the grunge thing came in, but Jerry Cantrell was still doin' solos. The guitar thing is comin' back around, too. I mean, you'll always have me and Dime playin' solos on our records. But what's gonna happen is, some 19- or 20-year-old kid

"I CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW A SOLO COULD EVER BE 'UNCOOL.' **PLAY SOMETHING GOOD AND IT WON'T BE UNCOOL,** YOU KNOW?"
— DIMEBAG DARRELL

NICK BOWCOTT (ZAKK/DIME) FUTURE (VINTAGE GW) PICTORIAL PRESS LTD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (DIME)

is gonna come out with some cool kickass band, and he's gonna make some 15-year-old kid wanna pick up a guitar and learn how to do a solo.

When Van Halen first came out with "Eruption," every town had some kid who knew how to play the song in its entirety. Nowadays, no one seems to be coming up with solos that inspire kids in the same way.

ZAKK: Put it this way: I love Ozzfest because Ozzy and Sharon [*Osbourne*] started the whole thing to promote metal. But two summers ago — I was actually laughing — I was telling Freddy McTaggart, who does my guitars, "I think Dime and I are the only motherfuckers on this whole tour that actually can get up from low E to high E and back safely!" [*Laughs*] We were sitting out there watching Pantera just blow the stage up and Dime just shredding all sick and insane. I was watching the other bands, and no one else was playing solos! And it's just like, why wouldn't you want to get better? I don't understand that.

DIME: I'm into the whole song-as-a-piece-of-music thing: if it literally doesn't call for it, if it already has enough stuff going on, then it's okay not to play a solo. I've tried to force a solo before, but sometimes it's like, "That thing don't really fit, man!" You know, you end up on a groove part that's powerful... I understand that. But let's have some fuckin' action out there! There's more to it than two or three strings on the low-end side, you know?

I mean, I could see how some people might hear some of the shit Zakk does and say, "I'm not ever gonna catch up, so why even try?" And that's the wrong way to look at it, if you ask me. You ain't gonna catch him, but why not do your own thing? Like I always say, the thick strings are a nut in themselves, what with all that chugging and grinding. But to really express yourself, you have to get out on them high strings and bend them motherfuckers. Get out there and play some shit! There ain't nothing wrong with it. I can never understand how a solo could ever be "uncool." Play something good and it won't be uncool, you know?

ZAKK: When you listen to Randy do a solo, or Eddie, or Hendrix or Jimmy Page, it brings the song to another spot. It's not like he's just going, "I'm the guitar player — I've gotta put a solo here."

DIME: That's not what we're saying — we're not saying, "Play the solo for the fuck of it, dude, just so you could say you did it!" But goddamn, you can't tell me that on a whole CD, from start to finish, there's no place for somethin' badass to be played over the top. And for music lovers, man, where we come from, I'm wantin' to hear some of that shit, you know? GW

ARIA OF EXPERTISE

GW DIGS THROUGH 60-PLUS YEARS OF ARIA GUITARS HISTORY

BY JOE MATERA

WHILE ARIA GUITARS might not enjoy the same lofty status as Gibson or Fender in the echelon of guitar makers, its outsider status and unique craftsmanship have certainly made it a worthy contender during the course of Aria's 60-plus years of existence. Some of the greatest guitarists — from Herb Ellis to Andy Summers, from Yngwie Malmsteen to George Lynch — have, at some point in their careers, brandished one of Aria's guitar models, such as its popular Aria Pro II series. Even in today's highly competitive marketplace, Aria continues to flourish and continues to build upon its innovative spirit.

THEY SAY NECESSITY is the mother of invention. In the story of Aria Guitars, necessity is very much central to the company's humble beginnings in Nagoya, Japan, in 1956. It started when talented classical guitarist Shiro Arai struggled to find outlets in his native country where he could buy nylon strings for his classical guitar. Frustrated by the scarcity, he came up with the idea of importing classical guitar strings from Augustine, a manufacturer in New York City. As word spread among Japanese guitarists and demand for Augustine strings grew, Arai set up Arai & Co. Inc. to cope with the flourishing sales. With the arrival of rock 'n' roll, Arai also began importing guitars, including Framus models from Germany.

During the early Sixties, the company expanded into production of its own guitars, beginning with acoustic and hollowbody models in 1960, followed by the introduction of solidbody electrics in 1963, issued under the brand names of Aria (an anagram of Arai) for the solidbody electrics and Aria Diamond for hollowbodies and basses. Soon the company began exporting guitars to various countries, including the United States. As demand grew, Aria contracted Matsumoku Industrial, a woodworking company based in Matsumoto, Nagano, to produce Aria guitars. Matsumoku previously built cabinets for Singer sewing machines as well as cabinets for televisions and home audio products for various companies, but after Singer moved cabinet production to the Philippines during the early Sixties, Matsumoku shifted its focus to musical instrument manufacturing.

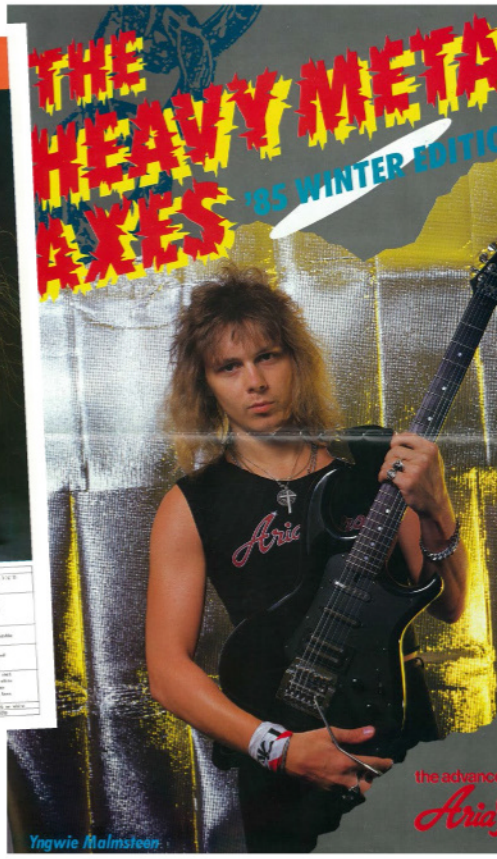
When Beatlemania blossomed all over the world around the same period, Aria started manufacturing violin-shaped guitars a la Paul McCartney's Höfner 500/1 bass. In 1968, Aria introduced its popular 1532T solidbody, featuring a radically angular offset body design inspired by the Fender Jaguar and Jazzmaster. Thanks to its success, the company introduced more new models, including the 1702T (a Mosrite Ventures copy identical to the Matsumoku-built Univox Hi-Flyer model played by Kurt Cobain), the R-320 (a Rickenbacker 360 copy) and the Aria Diamond 1412, a violin-shaped 12-string hollowbody electric.

During the late Sixties, Aria/Matsumoku began manufacturing Les Paul copies, which motivated several

JOHN VAN HASSELT/SYGMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Herb Ellis performs
at the Knebworth Jazz
Festival in July 1982

[*right*] Vintage Aria and Aria Pro ads starring Yngwie Malmsteen, Herb Ellis, Rudy Sarzo, John Taylor and more



> "I GOT MY PE-1500 BACK WHEN GUITARS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE BRIGHTLY COLORED AND ODDLY SHAPED"
> – HENRIK FLYMAN (EVIL MASQUERADE)

other Japanese guitar makers like Fujigen Gakki (Greco, Ibanez) and Tokai to follow suit. Eventually dozens of Japanese manufacturers followed Aria's lead and produced and exported a wide variety of inexpensive copies of various American guitar models that sometimes were of comparable or arguably better quality. When Norlin/Gibson threatened to sue Hoshino for trademark infringement, Aria and the other offenders cautiously shifted focus to developing original new designs for the export market while continuing to also produce copies for domestic sales.

Aria began its most prolific decade-long period in 1976 with the introduction of its flagship Aria Pro II prototype series. The first Aria Pro II model — the PE-1500, featuring a modified Les Paul-inspired single cutaway maple/mahogany/maple body with hand-carved arched single-piece top and back, innovative heel-less cutaway, two black-bobbin DiMarzio Super Distortion humbuckers and Antique Violin finish — hit the market the following year. The model proudly showcased Aria's painstaking dedication to developing a high-end guitar aimed at the professional market.

Nobuaki Hayashi, a young chief designer for Matsumoku who went under the pseudonym of H. Noble, conceived numerous Aria Pro II designs (including much of the PE-1500), many featuring "Designed & Approved by H. Noble" stamped on the headstock. Over the years, guitar collectors have increasingly sought models that bear his name. Hayashi left the company in the late Eighties to start Atlansia Guitars, a boutique guitar and bass company in Japan.

The PE-1500 was a well-received success. Further models followed, starting with the PE-800 in 1978 and the PE-600, PE-500 and PE-400 in respective order over the next few years. Each new model offered improvements, such as the materials used, functionality and decorative aspects such as bindings. Aria Pro II PE guitars were soon seen with guitarists like Neal Schon of Journey, Andy Summers of the Police (notably in the Police's 1978 performance of "Can't Stand Losing You" and "Next to You" on England's *The Old Grey Whistle Test* TV show) and Gerry Cott of the Boomtown Rats.

Henrik Flyman, guitarist with Scandinavian metal band Evil Masquerade, is a life-long dedicated Aria Pro II PE player who has kept the model relevant in the new millennium. "I got my PE-1500 back when guitars were supposed to be brightly colored and oddly shaped," Flyman says. "I found it collecting dust in a corner of the local music shop because guitars like that were not in high demand. I was originally looking for a Gibson Les Paul, but when I tried the PE-1500 I realized it was a much better fit. The deep cutaway and lack of a heel where the neck joins the body was a big bonus that made it a lot better than the Gibson. It was much easier to reach the higher notes, especially on the lower strings. I brought it home that day and have played it ever since."

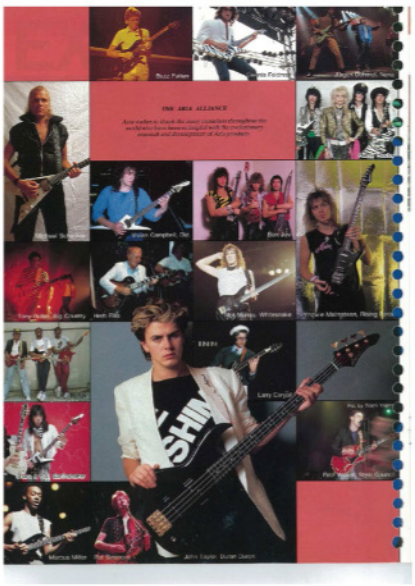
Shortly after the first Aria Pro II guitar model hit the market, the Aria Pro II SB (Super Bass) made its debut in the late Seventies. The flagship SB-1000 quickly became a mainstay for players such as Cliff Burton (Metallica), John Taylor (Duran Duran) and Cronos (Venom). During the Eighties, Michael Anthony (Van Halen), Jack Bruce and Rudy Sarzo (Whitesnake) were often seen playing an Aria SB bass on stage. Current Metallica bassist Robert Trujillo often plays an Aria SB when performing the band's Cliff Burton-era material.

American jazz great Herb Ellis became the company's first high-profile endorser in 1978. The PE-175 Herb Ellis model, an archtop electric heavily inspired by the Gibson ES-175, remained in production until the late Eighties. Between 1978 and 1982, the company produced the Aria Pro II Rev-Sound series models (RS-850, RS-750, RS-600 and others), which featured neck-thru-body construction with laminated multilayer maple and walnut necks and active electronics (RS-850 and RS-1000Z only). The Rev-Sound models resembled Alembic and Ibanez Musician "hippie sandwich" models that were popular during the late Seventies.

Aria Pro II offerings grew during the early Eighties with the additions of the Cardinal series (CS) and Thor Sound/Tri-Sound (TS) models, which offered bolt-on, set and neck-thru-body models. Demand for Super Strat guitars increased as heavy metal became more popular, and Aria responded by releasing the Aria Pro II RS Esprit in 1983, which was a much more streamlined version of the RS-850. The RS Esprit was briefly the guitar of choice for Yngwie Malmsteen during his stint with Alcatrazz from 1983 to 1984.

George Lynch briefly played the similar Aria Pro II RS Knight Warrior in 1984 and was photographed with the guitar on the back cover of Dokken's *Tooth and Nail*. "I never had an endorsement offered to me before," Lynch says. "I was extremely excited about getting a guitar and being promoted through a guitar company. Aria offered me one electric and one acoustic guitar, so I picked what I thought was the most upscale and coolest-looking guitar in their catalog, along with whatever acoustic guitar they offered me. I used the Knight Warrior to play exactly one note — which was a dive bomb at the end of some solo — on 'Tooth and Nail.' The Aria acoustic, on the other hand, was used for all the acoustic work on that same record, including 'Alone Again.' To be honest, my interaction with the Aria Pro

VINTAGE ADS COURTESY OF ARIA GUITARS



"I NEVER HAD AN ENDORSEMENT OFFERED TO ME BEFORE. I WAS EXCITED ABOUT BEING PROMOTED THROUGH A GUITAR COMPANY"
– GEORGE LYNCH

II was very limited and only for a short period of time while recording the album at Cherokee studios."

Aria's devotion to heavy metal-inspired designs expanded with the introduction of the Flying V-style Aria Pro II XX (including the rare XX-MS Michael Schenker signature model, which was his first signature V), Explorer-style Aria Pro II ZZ and Aria Pro II Urchin series, which resembled the B.C. Rich Stealth.

When Matsumoku shut down its factory in 1987, Aria moved its primary guitar manufacturing efforts to Korea and outsourced production of several models to other factories in Japan. During the Nineties, new models were added to the PE series such as the PE-SP and PE-DLX, but Aria Pro II guitars suffered a decline in popularity and sales. The slim, compact, modern design of the new SWB series upright electric basses featuring a Fishman custom bridge piezo pickup and active tone circuitry helped Aria maintain respect as an innovator, and the company still offers SWB basses today. From 1995 to 1999 Aria produced the Strat-style Aria Pro II FL (Fullerton Series) line, which were made in Korea with the exception of the top-shelf USA-made FL-50S and FL-60H. Several of the models featured Wilkinson vibratos, Seymour Duncan pickups and Sperzel tuners.

Because the American instrumental guitar group the Ventures remained hugely popular in Japan ever since the entire band first toured there in 1964 (Bob Bogle and Don Wilson previously played in Japan in 1962, but as a duo) and kicked off a boom in guitar sales, Aria joined forces with the group in 1991 to offer the first Ventures signature model instruments made exclusively for the Japanese market. In 1999 Aria released a new upgraded version, and in 2001, 2002 and 2003 Aria introduced Ventures signature models also sold outside of Japan, including in the U.S. Aria's Ventures models were heavily inspired by the Mosrite Ventures guitars endorsed by the group from 1963 through 1968.

As the company moved into the 21st century, the Aria Pro II brand name changed to simply Aria in 2000 for the overseas market while Pro II remained a Japan-only product. However, as the new millennium progressed, reignited interest in the earlier Aria Pro II models inspired the company to revive the Aria Pro II name in all markets by 2013.

In 2011, Aria released the Retro Style Series, which includes the Retro 1532, a recreation of the original 1532T issued in 1968. In 2020, Aria launched the completely new JET series of guitar, baritone and bass models featuring a distinctive offset single cutaway body design. Due to popular demand, the company added the Hi-Flyer-style DM-206 guitar and DMB-206 bass to its Retro series in 2021.

Recently, Aria introduced the Hot Rod Collection based upon the popular American-made Aria Fullerton guitars from the Nineties. These guitars emphasize the U.S. connection through models named after American cities or neighborhoods and their respective phone area codes, such as the "714 Fullerton," "615 Nashville" and "212 Bowery." Made in Japan, the Platinum Collection revives the SB-1000 bass and several PE models including the beloved PE-1500, plus the TA-Tonic thinline semi-hollow electric.

As Aria enters its sixth decade, its passion and dedication to guitar making remain as strong as ever. "Whatever happens, people always love to listen to and play music," says Kazuyuki Miyamoto from the International Sales Division at Aria Guitars in Japan. "We want to keep encouraging people to play and create music by providing attractive instruments at a reasonable price." GW

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SOUND CHECK

the gear in review

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GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Mark of the Beast

MESA BOOGIE MARK VII HEAD

By Chris Gill

IT'S RUMORED THAT Mesa Boogie's new Mark VII may be the last Mark Series amp designed by the company's founder, Randall Smith (although we're given assurance it's not his last Mesa, Boogie or new Gibson design). If so, it's a crowning achievement for a man who played a significant role in many of the most beloved guitar tones and modern amp features of the last five decades. In the spirit of the very first Mesa Boogie amp, which delivered a revolutionary new high-gain preamp that signified the dawn of the modern guitar amp (along with the performance of a 100-watt stack packed into a small Fender Princeton combo), the Mark VII's compact 19-inch, 40-pound chassis is loaded with an unfathomable variety of features and first-class tones — so many that I'm going to cut to the chase to cover as many of them as this space allows.

FEATURES The basic layout of the Mark VII is not much different than that of its Mark V predecessor introduced 14 years ago, with its control panel divided into three independent channels each with its own treble, mid, bass, presence, gain and master knobs and three mini switches for selecting voicing modes, graphic EQ assignment and 90/45/25-watt Simul-Class power amp output. In fact, the front panel's control layout is slightly more simplified, streamlined and intuitive than the Mark V's with fewer switches and knobs, but the Mark VII still delivers incredibly powerful tone-shaping versatility. The preamp voicing modes are also different than the Mark V, consisting of nine distinct amps (seven unique/two duplicated) in groups of three per channel — Clean/Fat/Crunch (1), Fat/Crunch/Mark VII (2) and Mark IIB/Mark IIC/Mark IV (3). The legendary five-band EQ is present, as is a long-tank spring reverb, outstand-

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE:
$3,499
MANUFACTURER:
Mesa Boogie, mesaboogie.com

- Three channels, each with fully independent EQ, gain, master, graphic EQ, reverb, effects loop and Simul-Class settings.
- Nine preamp voicing modes (7 unique/2 duplicated) provide several of Mesa Boogie's most desirable amps (Mark IIB, IIC and IV) plus the entirely new Mark VII high-gain voice.
- The CabClone IR DI Direct Interface features eight Boogie and Rectifier cabinets that can be assigned individually to each channel.
- Simul-Class provides selectable 25- (Class A triode), 45- (Class A pentode) and 90-watt (Class A and Class A/B blend) power amp output with differing responsiveness and character.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** If the Mark VII is indeed Randall Smith's final Mark Series amp, it is one hell of a crowning achievement that encompasses the best of Mesa Boogie's past while delivering incredible tones and performance features that pave the way for its future.

ing effects loop (all individually assignable for each channel) and a bias switch for swapping the 6L6 power tubes for EL34s.

The Mark VII's most notable new feature is its CabClone IR DI Direct Interface, which provides IR simulations of eight Boogie and Rectifier speaker cabinets in various open- and closed-back and 4x12, 2x12 and 1x12 configurations. CabClone is designed for direct recording and mic-free live performance applications, using the XLR Direct Out connected to a mixing console, and it also is heard via the amp's headphone output. Three eight-position Cab Select switches on the rear panel allow users to select any of the eight IRs independently for each channel, and users can manipulate or replace IRs via a computer connected to the amp's USB port.

Other notable features include a dry ¼-inch line out for re-amping applications, MIDI In and Out/Thru jacks and an included footswitch that connects to the amp via a 7-pin DIN connector and controls channel 1, 2 and 3, graphic EQ, effects loop and reverb on/off switching.

PERFORMANCE The Mark V provided a pretty damn good selection of classic Mesa Boogie amp tones, but I think that most players will find the Mark VII's selections are even better. The highly coveted Mark IIC is back and sounds as incredible as it did on the Mark V and JP2C, but the addition of a Mark IIB with its smooth, singing lead tones and super chunky distorted rhythm textures shows that Mesa aims to please a wider range of Boogie aficionados. The new Mark VII preamp voice offers a bold new addition to the company's legendary high-gain tone library, with more emphasized, sizzling upper mids than channel 3's Mark IIB/IIC/IV preamps.

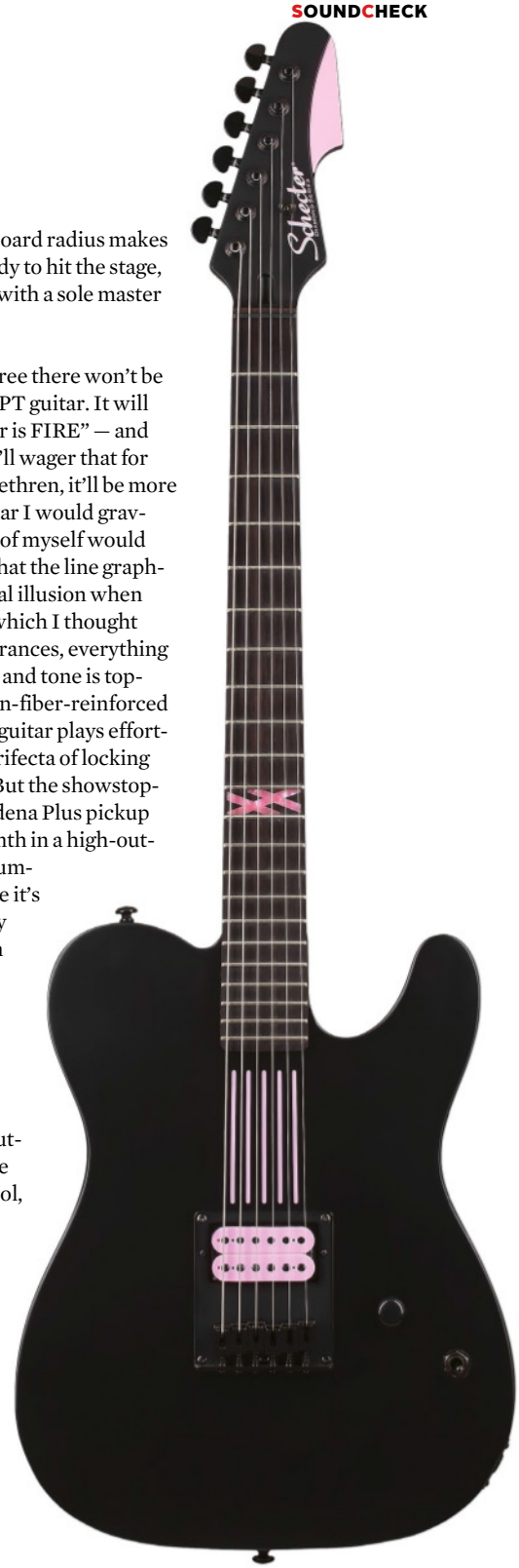
Mesa's high-gain distortion tones get all the attention for their world-class wallop, but players who specialize in country, blues, rockabilly and roots music will love channel 1 as much as metal heads rave about channels 2 and 3. The Clean setting has tight attack and aggressive punch with greater tonal range than a classic Fender, so every note of a boogie riff can bite like a rabid pit bull. Channel 1's Crunch setting is like the ultimate classic Marshall with pristine crushed-glass harmonic overtones that shimmer. Every channel and preamp setting has midrange that is simply dialed in to the sweet spot that most of us have spent thousands trying to achieve with various overdrive and distortion pedals and mods. Simply put, the Mark VII's mids will assure that your guitar will cut through a mix like a sushi chef's Yanagiba knife through a slab of premium otoro.

The CabClone IR section makes the Mark VII a solid contender for tube amp enthusiasts who are seduced by the capabilities of high-end digital amp modelers. The combination of preamp voices, Simul-Class responsiveness and character, powerful passive and graphic EQ and IR cabinets makes it easy to dial a universe of classic amp tones as well as a few new ones that will turn heads.

Pinky Blinder

SCHECTER GUITAR RESEARCH MACHINE GUN KELLY PT

By Paul Riario



ON THE SURFACE, Machine Gun Kelly (or MGK) appears much like window dressing as an artist. With rockstar looks and a skyrocketing career from rapper to pop-punk upstart, it's dismissively easy to surmise his entire musical persona feels a bit cut-and-pasted, which leads you to wonder whether it's all an act (I mean, he used to wear a vial of Megan Fox's blood around his neck, which, I guess, proves he's committed to something or someone). But MGK is a legit musician, and for what it's worth, he's one of the few stars who seriously plays guitar and is savvy enough to take a backseat by recruiting fret-burning British guitarist Sophie Lloyd for his tour, who adds a great deal of musical energy to his performances. Despite all this, his surging Hollywood celebrity garnered him a signature guitar with Schecter (in a *Ticket to My Downfall* hot pink finish) and since then, MGK stoked a lot of excitement by appearing on his *Mainstream Sellout* album cover with the same thematic guitar in a new colorway — raising hopes that this newly unreleased six-string would soon be available to his wildly popular fanbase or for players who dig a super-streamlined T-style guitar with eye-catching graphics. Well, the wait is over: this Guitar Center exclusive Schecter Guitar Research Machine Gun Kelly PT in satin black with hot pink line graphics is here and yours to flaunt and rip some tasty licks on.

FEATURES If you want to get your hands on one, you should know this particular MGK PT model is available only through Guitar Center. It's no secret the music retailer has long been partnering with top guitar manufacturers like Schecter to design uniquely spec'd guitars that are exclusive only to them. And here, the Machine Gun Kelly PT in hot pink line graphics is exactly the same as the other MGK PT (in Downfall Pink) with just a few cosmetic differences. Outside of the black satin finish that covers the whole guitar, flecks of hot pink stand out, starting with the line graphics on the body, hot pink "XX" inlay at the 12th fret, pink logo and pink splash at the headstock's lower peak, and a hot pink open-coil Schecter Pasadena Plus pickup in its Schecter PT-H bridge. First and foremost, the MGK PT feels solidly constructed with an alder body and a Canadian rock maple neck with a dark ebony fretboard, 22 jumbo frets, a Graph Tech XL TUSQ nut and Schecter locking tuners. Its bolt-on neck is finely contoured at the heel for easy access to higher fret registers and a thin "C" profile neck shape along with a flat 14–inch fretboard radius makes playing it a breeze. When you're ready to hit the stage, the MGK PT becomes alive or dead with a sole master volume and kill switch.

PERFORMANCE Most of us can agree there won't be any lukewarm reaction to the MGK PT guitar. It will likely be "Oh, hell no" to "That guitar is FIRE" — and probably nothing in between. Still, I'll wager that for most of my Millennial and Gen-Z brethren, it'll be more of the latter. And while it's not a guitar I would gravitate to currently, a younger version of myself would be all over it. One thing I noticed is that the line graphics create a three-dimensional optical illusion when looking down between the strings, which I thought was striking. Moving on from appearances, everything else about the MGK PT's playability and tone is top-notch. With a tiny tweak of its carbon-fiber-reinforced truss rod to straighten the neck, the guitar plays effortlessly and in tune with the magical trifecta of locking tuners, jumbo frets and low action. But the showstopper for me is the lone Schecter Pasadena Plus pickup that combines punchiness and warmth in a high-output pickup. It's a surprising do-all humbucker that is perfectly voiced where it's neither bright nor too dark but finely focused for tighter mids with a clean bite. And something you don't often find on a guitar like this is the master volume can be gently rolled off for articulate cleans without losing any treble response. I gotta hand it to MGK for relying on this back-to-basics approach of going from full output to clean at just a simple roll of the knob. The kill-switch inclusion is cool, but I'm also shocked MGK went for the old-school selector rather than a modern kill-switch button (but I'm assuming he's just shutting the guitar off rather than going for the stutter effect), although I wish the kill-switch was closer to the cutaway a la Tom Morello's "Arm the Homeless" guitar. The MGK PT is a guitar that makes a big statement, but one that is clear and concise.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $999
MANUFACTURER: Schecter Guitar Research, guitarcenter.com

- The alder body is finished in a smooth satin black with hot pink graphics and stripped-down appointments.
- The open-coil Schecter Pasadena Plus bridge humbucker is a muscular pickup voiced with attitude.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The flashy Schecter Machine Gun Kelly PT in HPLG is an all-or-nothing workhorse guitar that delivers an articulate modern tone with pugnacious brawn.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Foundations of Tone

SOURCE AUDIO EQ2 AND ZIO PEDALS

By Chris Gill

SOURCE AUDIO'S PEDALS — like the Collider, Nemesis and Ventris delay and reverb effects as well as older units like the Soundblox Pro Multiwave Distortion — are so innovative and sophisticated that the company's more utilitarian products are often overlooked. Although EQ and boost pedals are about as utilitarian as it gets, the Source Audio EQ2 Programmable Equalizer and ZIO Analog Front End + Boost make these meat and potatoes effects as sophisticated, sexy and tasteful as a wagyu ribeye steak with truffle pommes aligot. Individually or together, the EQ2 and ZIO can work wonders on a guitar rig's tone and performance, and they possibly could end many players' search for the ultimate sound.

FEATURES Both the EQ2 and ZIO are housed in compact, pedalboard-friendly formats. ZIO features a bare-bones control configuration, consisting of an output knob that provides up to +20dB of boost, a four-position Circuit switch with JFET, Low-Cut, Studio (which is based on a vintage Pultec Equalizer) and E-Plex preamp settings, a bright/medium/dark tone switch that emulates the capacitance of different length guitar cables, a bypass/mute switch, a true bypass footswitch, mono ¼-inch input and output jacks and a ¼-inch tuner/line out jack.

The EQ2's front panel controls are even more bare-bones, consisting of a single rotary encoder, a mini switch for selecting or saving four presets, a mini output knob that controls up to +12dB of boost, bypass footswitch (analog buffered or relay-based true bypass), stereo ¼-inch input and output jacks, full-size MIDI In and Out/Thru jacks, USB port and 3.5mm control input for optional switch or expression controllers. The illuminated display shows settings for each of the 10 EQ bands, tuner settings and a navigable options menu for adjusting various parameters. Presets and detailed parameter settings can be programmed using the free Neuro Desktop Editor and Mobile App software.

PERFORMANCE The EQ2 is not your run-of-the-mill graphic EQ pedal but rather more like a highly sophisticated studio-quality graphic/parametric EQ plug-in in a pedal format. Users can specify any center frequency from 20 to 20,000Hz (not just the 31, 62, 125, 250, 500, etc. frequencies shown on the display), Q (width) and +/-18dB gain of boost/cut individually for each of the 10 bands, and each output can be assigned an entirely different EQ curve. Each preset can also have its own limiter, noise gate, high pass filter (10-250Hz), filter configuration (parallel or series/cascaded), peaking/shelving options for bands 1 and 10 and much more. Programming these settings from the pedal itself can be tedious, but the Neuro software makes it very easy to quickly program presets. While four presets are instantly accessible via the front panel, the pedal can access up to 128 presets via MIDI.

The EQ2 is incredibly sonically powerful and capable of shaping the sound of your rig in ways you've probably never dreamed were possible. Within a few minutes working with the app, I programmed settings that transformed dark, warm humbuckers into beefy, stinging Strat single-coil tones that would have made SRV sweat and came very close to classic Metallica scooped mid tones that originally required a combination of graphic and parametric EQs. Midrange tweaks gave me some of the fattest vocal-like Schenker, Scholz and Elliott Easton tones with gorgeously expressive dynamics. The EQ2 could easily make most of my various flavors of overdrive and distortion pedals, amps and even custom pickup configurations obsolete — it's simply that versatile and good.

What the EQ2 delivers in terms of versatility, the ZIO provides in transparency, making a good rig sound great and a great rig sound incredible whether placed at the front or back of a signal chain or inserted in an effects loop. ZIO is all about clean boost, and its overall effect on tone is more as a sweetener than shaper. The foundation is a highly transparent JFET input Burr Brown op-amp that provides clean, uncolored boost in the JFET setting, bass roll-off in the Low-Cut setting and articulated sweet-spot mids and decreased mud in the Studio setting. A discrete MOSFET input closely mimics the behavior of an old Echoplex preamp with a hint of added grit in the E-Plex setting. The differences between circuit and tone (cable-length capacitance) settings can be subtle, but discriminating tone connoisseurs will appreciate the attention to these finer details.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICES: $199 (ZIO); $289 (EQ2)
MANUFACTURER:
Source Audio, sourceaudio.net

- The EQ2 provides 10 highly adjustable bands of EQ that can be set to any frequency with individual Q settings and +/-18dB of boost/cut.
- ZIO is a clean boost pedal with four distinctive preamp circuit settings and a three-position switch that emulates capacitance of short to long guitar cables.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
  Used together or separately, the Source Audio EQ2 and ZIO can help guitarists dial in the tones of their dreams by bringing out the best of a rig (ZIO) or shaping a rig's tonal personality in numerous previously unimaginable ways (EQ2).

Buzz Bin

Shure GLXD16+ Dual Band Digital Wireless Guitar Pedal System

SHURE NEEDS NO introduction as an unparalleled leader in audio innovation and as the industry standard in microphones and wireless systems for live performances. Outside of their renowned microphones, Shure's touring-grade wireless systems have always been priced slightly out of reach for most non-professional guitarists and bassists. But now, Shure aims to change all that with the rollout of their new GLXD+ Dual Band Digital Wireless System, which is available in rack-mount, tabletop and guitar pedal receiver versions. Of course, this wireless system applies to vocalists and presenters as well, with a wide selection of lavalier, headset and handheld microphone options. But as a six-stringer, I'm here to focus on the pedalboard-friendly GLXD16+ Digital Wireless Guitar Pedal System, which has not only given me untangled freedom in my gigging life, but I believe it to be a frontrunner for its rugged reliability, ease of use and crystal-clear signal transparency.

Housed in indestructible metal enclosures, the GLXD16+ guitar pedal receiver and transmitter (with a locking 4-pin mini connector Neutrik cable) are designed to work seamlessly for players who favor a wireless system integrated within their pedalboards. What makes Shure's GLXD+ range unique is that it capitalizes on doubling available bandwidth with its Dual Band system that operates in the license-free 2.4GHz and 5.8GHz bandwidths. The result of this remarkable technology is it removes all guesswork by automatically scanning for and selecting the clearest available frequencies to prevent any signal interference and dropouts. The guitar system also addresses improved battery life by offering up to 12 hours of operation (with its included lithium-ion battery that can be conveniently charged via USB-C from the transmitter), and even more imperative in times of a gig crisis — it can provide 1.5 hours of use from a 15-minute quick charge, which should last longer than your setlist. In addition, the pedal receiver includes a tuner (with needle and strobe modes) and a 1/4–inch input (for cabling in) and operates on 9V DC power. And in case you're wondering, two or more transmitters can be linked to the receiver, allowing for uninterrupted instrument swaps.

From setup to play, what makes the GLXD16+ so damn appealing is that it's done within seconds. With the receiver active and the transmitter fully charged, simply turn on the transmitter till the green LED flashes, and *presto!* — you're up and running with a clean signal, which to my ears, sounds clearly enhanced. You can monitor battery life from the receiver's battery meter (even if you get to the last LED, you still have 30 minutes of playing time), and if you need further adjustments there are buttons for Mode, Channel and Group. The tuner is super accurate and can be set for mute or always-on, and the system allows for locking the receiver to save changes you've made. There's much more, but hell, I've already made this my go-to wireless system. — *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $499
MANUFACTURER: Shure, shure.com/glxdplus

IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/july2023

THEORIES OF RELATIVITY, PART 2

More soloing approaches over relative major and minor chords

LAST MONTH, WE looked at ways to craft melodies that work well over relative major and minor chords. To review, a relative minor chord is rooted a minor 3rd, or three half steps or frets, below a major chord. As I mentioned, shifting between relative major and minor chords and is a common move in popular music and can be heard in countless songs, such as "Dock of the Bay" by Otis Redding, "Yesterday" by the Beatles, "Into the Great Wide Open" by Tom Petty and "The Boys of Summer" by Don Henley.

An effective strategy for soloing over an alternating relative major/minor axis is to use similar or identical scales for both chords while targeting chord tones, so as to give the melody direction and purpose.

The chord progression used as the foundation for this lesson is from my song "Twilights," which incorporates two different pairs of relative major and minor chords. The first eight bars are played over an alternating two-bar pattern of F(sus2) to Dm(sus2). In bars 9-14, the progression modulates, but with a twist, in that we first go to the relative minor chord of B♭, Gm (actually G7sus4), then the relative major, B♭(6sus2). The final two bars then move from Csus4 to C to Csus2.

FIGURE 1 presents an improvised solo played over the progression. I start off down in 1st position in bars 1 and 2, playing melodic lines that incorporate the use of open strings. In bar 1, the line played over F(sus2) is built with notes from the F major pentatonic scale (F, G, A, C, D), with the open A, D and G strings utilized. In bar 2, the line played over Dm(sus2) is based on F major pentatonic's relative minor scale, D minor pentatonic (D, F, G, A, C). Notice that the two scales are made up of the very same five notes, the only difference being their root orientation (F versus D). In bars 3-6, the lines move up to 3rd and 5th positions.

FIGURES 2 and **3** offer a more detailed look at F major pentatonic, and **FIGURE 4** illustrates D minor pentatonic.

At bar 9, as we modulate to the key of G minor and the progression moves to G7sus4, I play lines based on the G minor pentatonic scale (G, B♭, C, D, F). In bar 10, as we move to the relative major key, with the chord B♭(6sus2), I play lines based on G minor pentatonic's relative major scale — B♭ major pentatonic (B♭, C, D, F, G). Again, notice that both scales consist of the same five notes.

The progression culminates with Csus4-C-Csus2, and here I play lines that make reference to the seven-note F major scale (F, G, A, B♭, C, D, E).

FIG. 1 F(sus2) Dm(sus2) F(sus2)

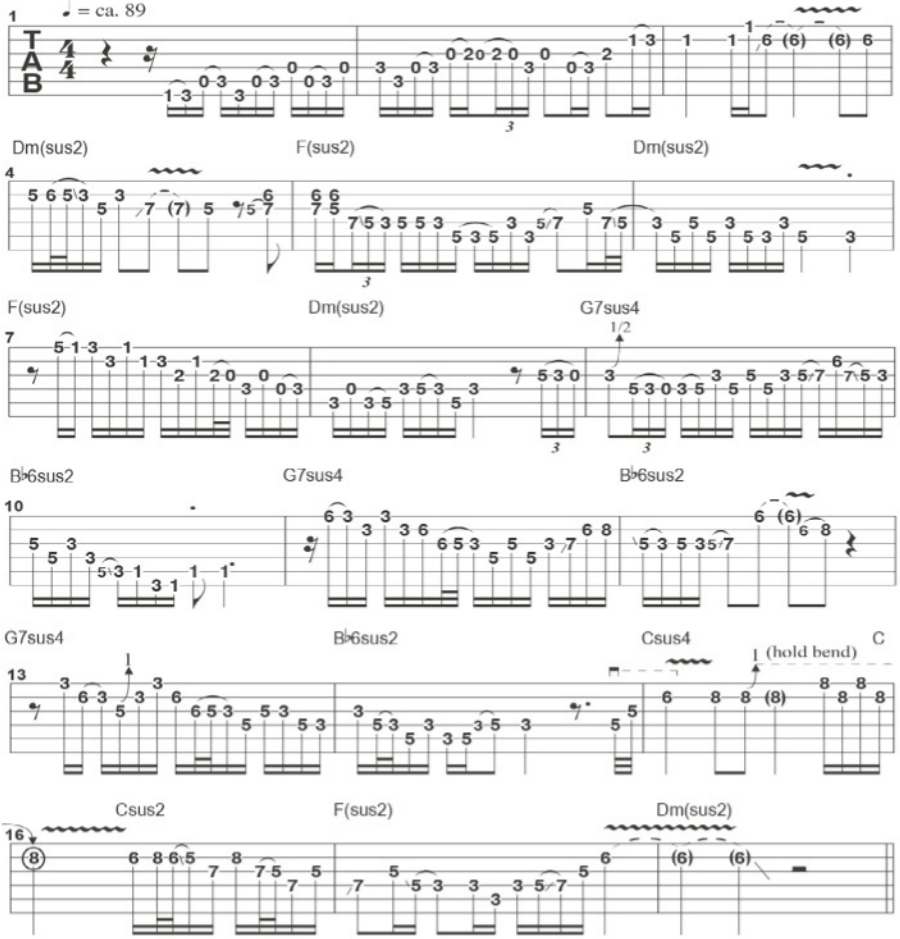


FIG. 2 F major pentatonic w/open strings

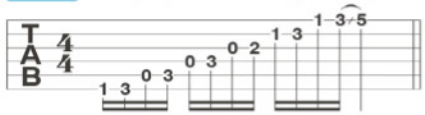


FIG. 3 F major pentatonic w/position shifts

FIG. 4 D minor pentatonic w/open strings

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction. His latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE
by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/july2023

TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 4

The 1954 Fender Stratocaster

IF YOU HAVE been with me for the last few columns, you know that I've been demoing a variety of my favorite vintage guitars and discussing each instrument's unique attributes. We began with a 1954 Gibson Les Paul goldtop with P90s, followed by a 1961 Gibson dot-neck ES-335 and a 1952 Fender Esquire. This month, our focus will be the 1954 Fender Stratocaster.

While detailing all the great things about the '52 Esquire, I said (as I often do), "Leo got it right the first time!," of course refering to Leo Fender, founder of Fender guitars. The same can be said about the '54 Strat, which was the first year of the model.

To me, all the instruments discussed thus far are sonic "staples of life," for us guitar players. A Les Paul, a 335, an SG, a Firebird, a Strat, a Telecaster, are all benchmarks from which guitar tones are judged.

Strats were first offered with maple fingerboards, and, starting in 1959, the guitars were available with rosewood fingerboards. One can argue that a rosewood board results in more of a Stevie Ray Vaughan-type sound. I always refer to maple-neck Strats as the "Buddy Holly" guitar, and great players such as Eric Johnson. Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix are also well known for playing maple neck Strats. Personally, I'm more of a maple-fretboard Strat player. To my ears, the notes jump off it in a different way, as compared to a rosewood board. Whether one prefers maple or rosewood fingerboards, Stratocasters will produce a wide range of fantastic tones, and combined with the ash body and the low-output pickups, these guitars do something very special.

Let's begin on the neck pickup, with the example presented in **FIGURE 1**. Using the pickup's full, round tone, I begin with licks based on C♯ minor pentatonic (C♯, E, F♯, G♯, B). I then move down to B and F♯m, the iv (four minor chord) of C♯m, and then ascend through G, D and E before finishing up with some more C♯m pentatonic-based lines.

The licks in bars 5-7 are inspired by both Jimi Hendrix and Eric Johnson. On beat 3 of bar 5, I bend a B note on the 2nd string's 12th fret up a whole step to C♯ with my ring finger, which additonally "catches," or "snags," the 3rd string, resulting in that

FIG. 1 (C♯m) (neck pickup)

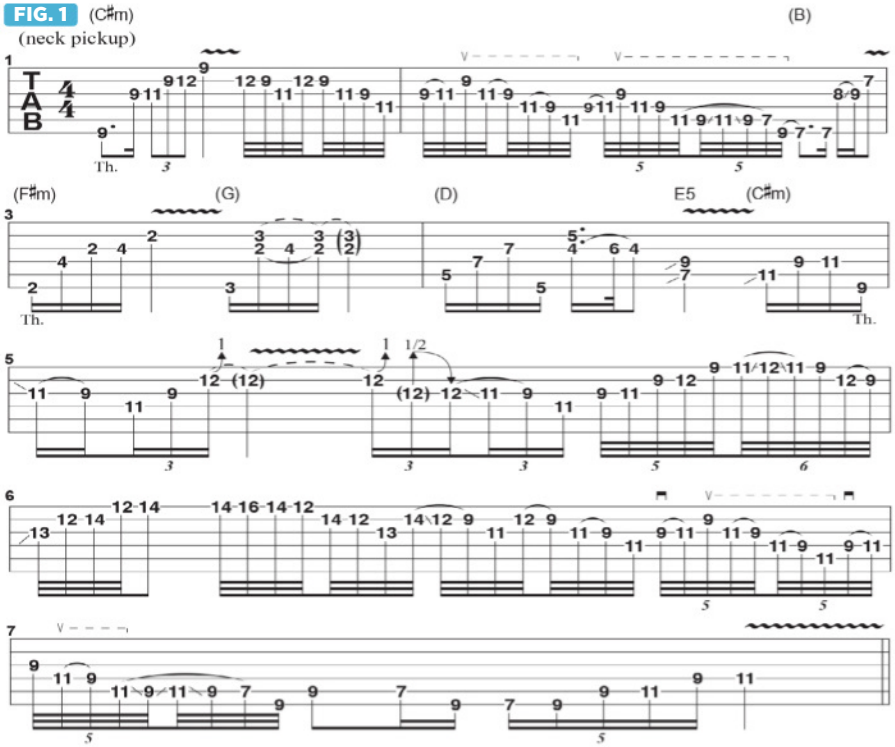
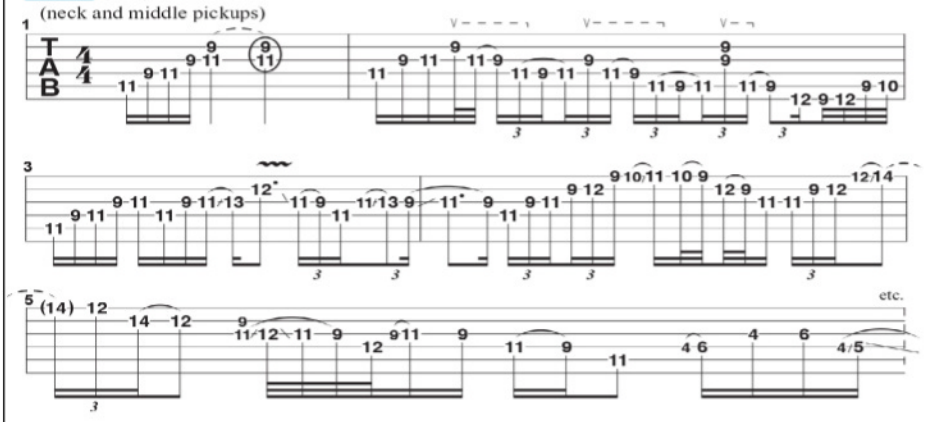


FIG. 2 (C♯m) (neck and middle pickups)



string being pre-bent up a half step, after which I release the bend, slide down one fret to F♯ and then pull-off to E at the 9th fret. This move is one used prevalently by Jimi Hendrix. The subsequent fast C♯ minor pentatonic phrases bring to mind runs Eric Johnson will often play. The reverse raking technique — dragging the pick across two or more strings in a single upstroke — in bars 6 and 7 is one closely associated with SRV.

Although the Stratocaster was originally equipped with just a three-way toggle switch (the modern five-way switch not being introduced until 1977), one can set it between the neck and middle pickups or the middle and bridge pickups to yield two more tonal settings. In **FIGURE 2**, I set the toggle between the neck and middle pickups as I play through lines based primarily on C♯ minor pentatonic.

Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/july2023

HYBRID VEHICLE, PART 2

More on using hybrid picking for lead playing

LAST MONTH, WE began investigating the use of hybrid picking techniques — wherein flatpicking and fingerpicking are combined to perform single-note melodies and/or chordal figures. As a basis for our study, I presented passages from my tune "On Your Way Sweet Soul," from my 2016 album *Theme from a Perfect World*. This month, we'll continue exploring some of the many different and effective ways one can apply hybrid picking to melodic phrases.

Let's begin with a lick based on the E major pentatonic scale (E, F♯, G♯, B, C♯). **FIGURE 1** is a six-note phrase played on the 5th and 4th strings using a rhythm of 16th notes. The first three notes, E, F♯ and G♯, are sounded with a single downstroke pick attack followed by a hammer-on and a slide. The lone note on the 4th string, B, is fingerpicked with the middle finger. Cycle this phrase up and down repeatedly and listen for the variance in attack as you switch from flatpicking to fingerpicking.

In **FIGURE 2**, we have another repeating pattern, but at the end of bar 2 and into bar 3, the rhythm speeds up, shifting from 16th notes to 16th-note triplets, with grace-note finger slides.

We can apply this approach to a longer idea, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 3**. We're still in the key of E major here, but we're now utilizing the full E major scale (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D♯). As we had done previously, we're still using only one pick-hand articulation per string. The phrase begins with a picked downstroke on the 5th string, after which the note on the 4th string, B, is fingerpicked, followed by a slide down to A, then back up to B, and then a hammer-on to C♯. We then move over to the 3rd string and fingerpick an E note, which slides down to D♯ and back, followed by a hammer-on to F♯. Notice that the shape of the line and the articulation scheme on the 3rd string is identical to that on the 4th string. As I move over to the 2nd string, I fingerpick the first note, A, then perform a pull-off and hammer-on between G♯ and A. I then use the pick to sound B at the 12th fret and slide up to C♯ at the 14th fret, which I then bend up one and a half steps to E and release.

There's a great hybrid-picking lick that I gleaned from .38 Special guitarist Jeff Carlisi. In their hit song "Hold on Loosely," Jeff plays a cool phrase during his outro solo that has always perplexed me. For years, I played it with flatpicking exclusively, as shown in **FIGURES 4** and **5**. Well, I finally met Jeff about 15 years ago at a Rock Camp we did together. I said, "Jeff, you have to show me how you play that lick!" It turns out he hybrid picks it, as illustrated in **FIGURE 6**. Playing around an E major triad shape in 12th position, he fingerpicks the initial E note then articulates the five subsequent notes with either the plectrum, a pull-off or a hammer-on, which together give the line a great, rolling flow.

FIG. 1 (E)

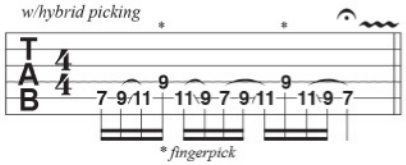


FIG. 2 (E)

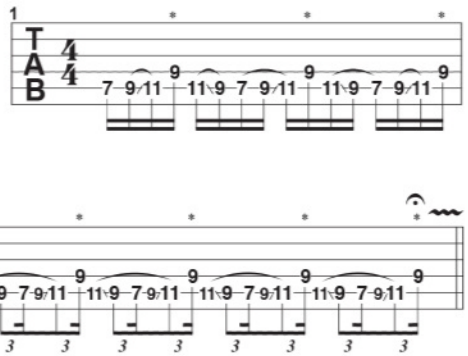


FIG. 3 (E)

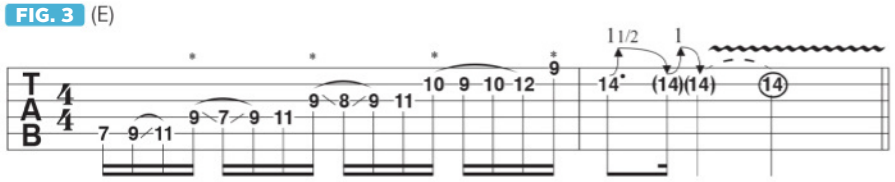


FIG. 4 (E)

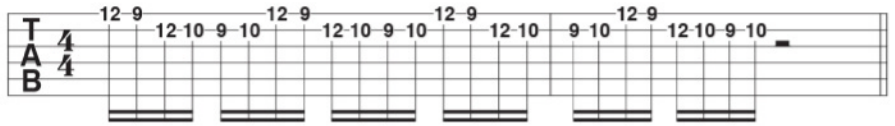


FIG. 5 (E)

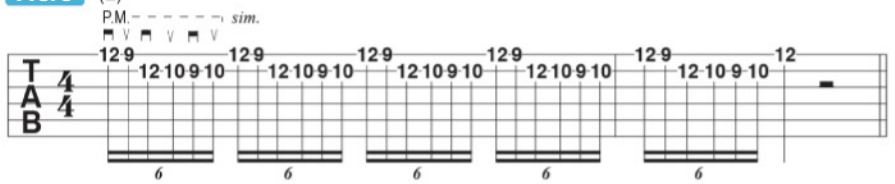
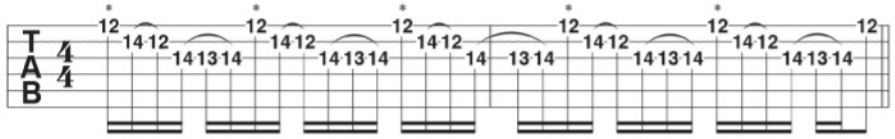


FIG. 6 (E)



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His latest album, *Electric Truth*, is out now.

SIMONE CECHETTI

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/july2023

CHROMA-ZONE

Using chromatic passing tones as connective tissue

LAST MONTH, WE began a new series of lessons covering three specific approaches I like to take when soloing, whether within a 12-bar blues, a one-chord funk vamp, a swinging country tune or a jazz standard. We started off exploring the use of *chromaticism*, which refers to playing notes or chords that are a half step apart. For example, playing the notes C, C♯, D, D♯ and E in order would constitute an ascending chromatic line. Playing E, E♭, D, D♭ and C would constitute a descending chromatic line.

We kicked things off by exploring some ways to add chromatic movement to a rhythm guitar part across a 12-bar blues progression, in order to place one in the mindset of "hearing" the chromatic movement between the chords, with a few licks added to help connect the chords. I like to refer to this approach as playing *through the changes*.

In this column, we'll focus on crafting single-note lines that incorporate the use of chromatic passing tones to help you "connect the dots," or "build bridges," as you move through the various chords of a blues progression.

Presented in the key of A, **FIGURE 1** offers a typical bebop jazz-style lick that connects the I (one) chord, A7, to the IV (four) chord, D7. In bar 1, I start from the note C and walk up chromatically in sequential half steps to C♯, D, D♯ and E and then wrap up the line with a chromatic walk-down from E to E♭ to D, landing on the D7 chord.

A great, musically effective technique is to cycle this chromatically ascending lick, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 2**. In **FIGURE 3**, I apply the cycling technique to a longer phrase that culminates with a descent down to the IV chord, D7. In **FIGURE 4**, I take a smaller section of the chromatic phrase — using just the notes D, D♯ and E — and cycle the phrase five times before chromatically working my way down to D7.

When playing chromatic ideas, it's crucial to try and make the lines sound and feel good and "swing" as much as possible. We're not playing anything that's harmonically sophisticated here. Getting the most out of these lines is all about the way they feel musically and the way that you land on certain notes, whether you choose to emphasize an appropriate chord tone or one of the chromatic passing tones.

FIGURE 5 offers an example of playing through an entire 12-bar blues form and demonstrates a bit of how I "hear" things, in regard to playing through the changes.

As you study this solo, notice all of the many different places and ways in which I bring chromatic movement into my improvised lines, all the while striving to play with as much of an "in-the-pocket" swinging feel as possible.

FIG. 1

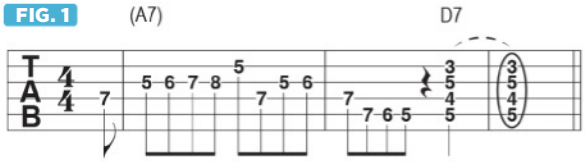


FIG. 2

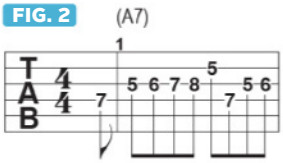


FIG. 3

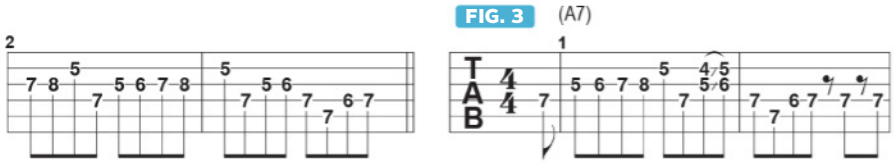


FIG. 4

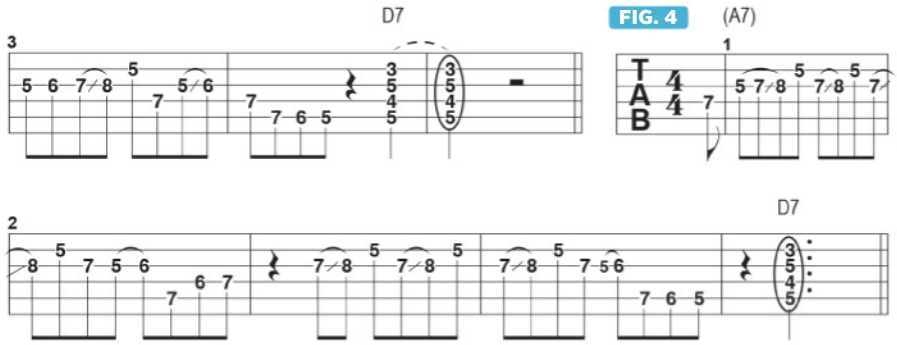
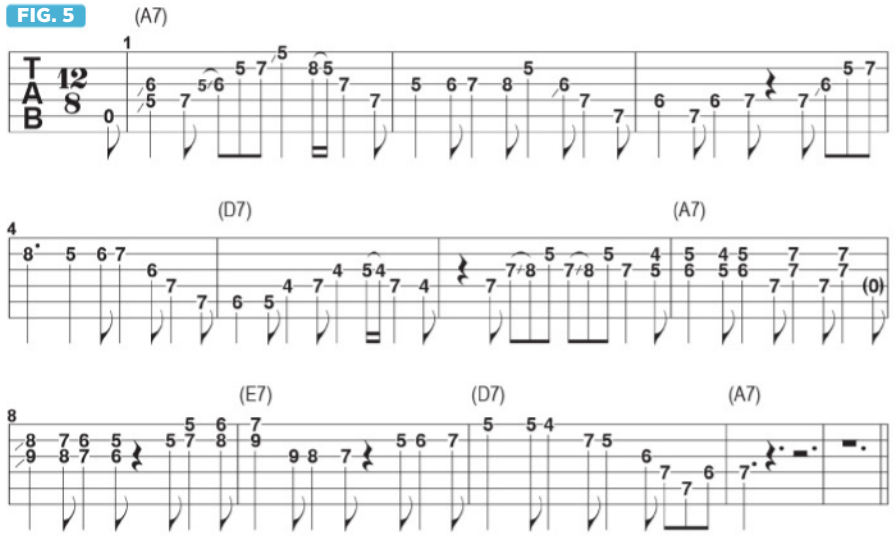


FIG. 5



Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

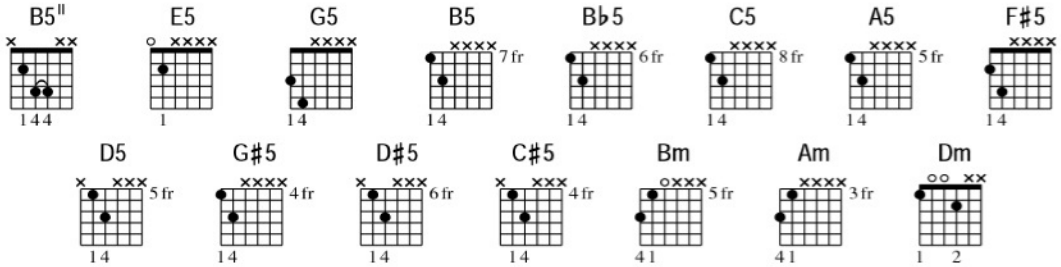
"MOUTH FOR WAR"

Pantera

As heard on **VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER**

Words and Music by VINCE ABBOTT, DARRELL ABBOTT, REX BROWN *and* PHIL ANSELMO • *Transcribed by* ANDY ALEDORT

All instruments are tuned down approximately one quarter step.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Slow ♩ = 80

B5 II

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.) (play 3 times)

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

*repeat previous chord

Bass w/pick

Bass Fig. 1 (play 3 times) Bass Fig. 1a

Double-Time ♩ = 160 (0:12)

1., 2., 3. 4.

E5 G5 B5 G5 B5 G5 B5 G5 N.C.(B5) N.H. E5

pitches: D, G, C (slightly flat)

Bass Fig. 2 Bass Fill 1

Half-Time ♩ = 80 (0:24)

B♭5 B5 C5 A5 B♭5 G5 A5 F♯5 G5 B♭5 B5 C5 A5 B♭5 G5 N.H. E5

P.M.

pitches: G, C (slightly flat)

Bass Fig. 3

"MOUTH FOR WAR"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY VINCE ABBOTT, DARRELL ABBOTT, REX BROWN AND PHIL ANSELMO.
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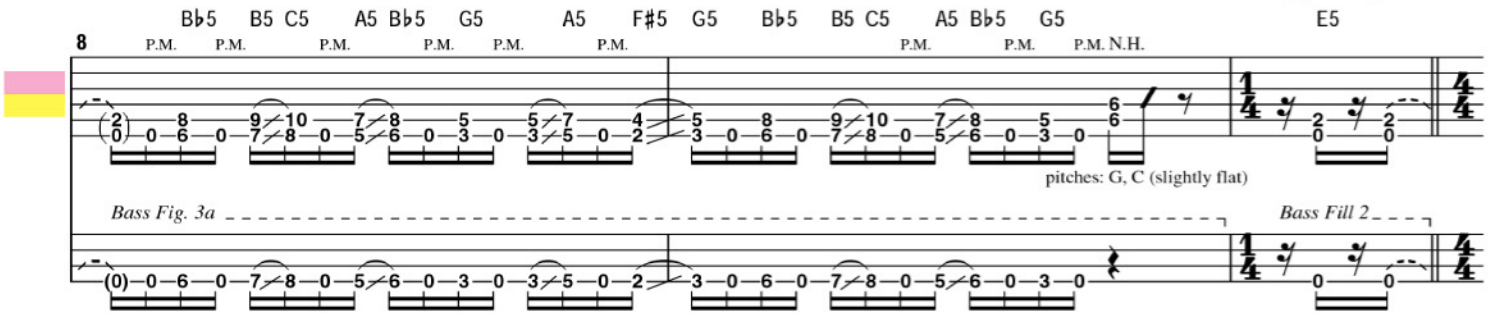
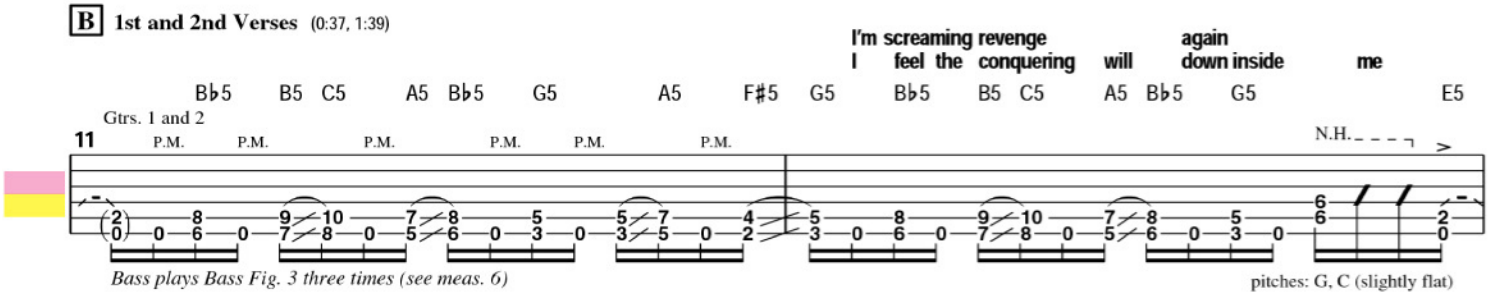
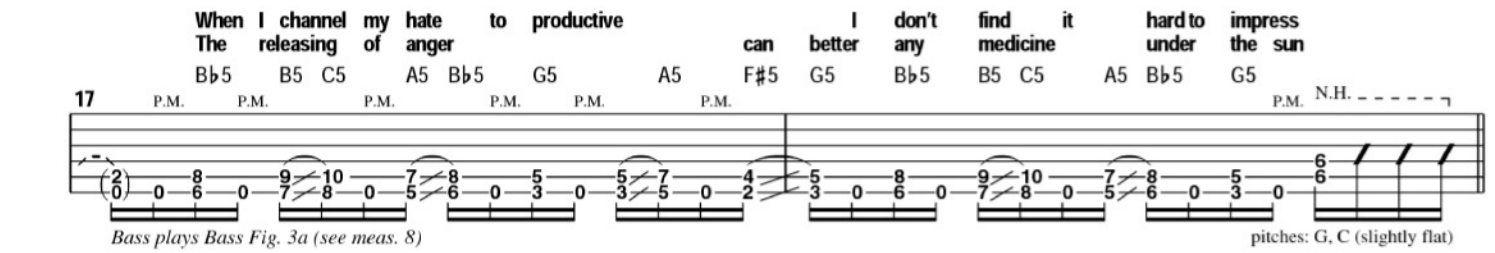
(1.) Revenge

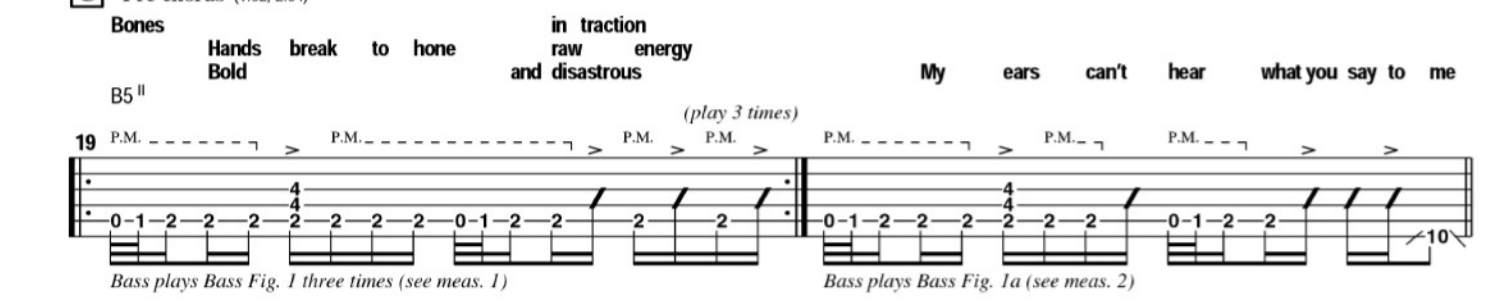


B **1st and 2nd Verses** (0:37, 1:39)





C **Pre-chorus** (1:02, 2:04)



D **Chorus** (1:14, 2:16)

Double-Time ♩ = 160

(2nd time) skip ahead to guitar solo **F**

Use it for what it's for
Hold your mouth for the war
Speak the truth about me

Determined

E5 G5 B5 G5 B5 G5 B5 G5 E5 G5 B5 G5 N.C.(B5) E5

Rhy. Fig. 1 *(play 3 times)*

Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Rhy. Fig. 1 second time (see meas. 21)

21

N.H.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 three and one half times (see meas. 3)

pitches: G, C (slightly flat)

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 on 1st chorus (see meas. 5)

E (1:26)

Half-Time ♩ = 80

1.

B♭5 B5 C5 A5 B♭5 G5 A5 F♯5 G5 B♭5 B5 C5 A5 B♭5 G5 E5

25

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. N.H.

1st time: Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see meas. 6)
2nd time: Bass plays Bass Fig. 3a (see meas. 8)

pitches: G, C (slightly flat)

2.

go back to verse **B**

2. Possessed

G5 B♭5 B5 C5 A5 B♭5 G5 E5

27

P.M. P.M. P.M. N.H.

pitches: G, C (slightly flat)

Bass plays Bass Fill 2 (see meas. 10)

F **Guitar Solo** (2:28)

Half-Time ♩ = 80

N.C.(G♯5) E5 (D5)

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

29

full

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fig. 2

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

**slow vibrato*

(G♯5) E5 (D5) (G♯5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 two and one half times (see meas. 29)

31 Gtr. 3

full full full full full full full full full full

Bass

E5
(D5)
(G♯5)
34
full
1½
w/bar
P.M.
let ring
G Bridge (2:53)
E5
D5
F♯5 G♯5
B5 G♯5
D♯5 D5 C♯5 B5
F♯5
Gtr. 3
36
full
(w/echo repeats)
Gtr. 1 w/bar
Gtr. 2
P.M.
Bass
There comes a time within everyone
to close your eyes to what's real
P.H.
w/bar
-3½
38 Gtrs. 1 and 2
E5
D5
F♯5 G♯5
B5 G♯5
D♯5 D5 C♯5 B5
F♯5
E5
D5
Bass
H Fast ♩ = 304 (3:06)
Yeah
Ow
G♯5
F♯5
G♯5
F♯5
41
(repeat previous measure)

I 3rd and 4th Verses (3:15, 3:29)
3. No comprehension to fail I
4. Like a knife into flesh
G♯5
Bm
49
P.M.
vacuum the wind for my sail
after life is to death
N.C.(G♯5)
Am
53
P.M.
Can't be the rest Let others waste my time
Pulling and pushing the rest of duration
N.C.(G♯5)
Bm
57
P.M.
1.
Owning success is the bottom line
no one can piss on this
N.C.(G♯5)
Am
G♯5
F♯5
61
P.M.
2.
determination
Dm
G♯5
F♯5
J Outro (3:43)
Uh (sung 1st time only)
G♯5
F♯5
67
(play 15 times)
(play 15 times)

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"MOUTH FOR WAR"
Pantera

WRITTEN AND RECORDED during the pinnacle of Pantera's musical powers, this early Nineties groove metal anthem features legendary guitar god Dimebag Darrell laying down pummeling crunch riffs and a characteristically fiery solo, which the goateed axeman performed on his iconic Dean guitar, plugged into a Randall Century 200 solid-state amp rig, set to produce his signature high-gain, mid-scooped tone, with its tight bottom end and long sustain.

As he routinely did during this era, Dime recorded this song with his guitar tuned approximately midway between E standard and E♭ (or D♯) standard, slightly closer to the latter. More specifically, 60 cents flat of E and 40 cents sharp of D♯. Depending on the capabilities of your electronic tuner, you may need to fine tune your strings by both eye and ear, in order to match the pitch on the recording. This customized tuning no doubt contributed to the sound and feel of Dime's unique rhythm and lead playing style.

Not including the solo, pretty much all of the song's riffs are properly performed with consecutive downstrokes, the only exceptions being the occasional pairs of 32nd notes in bars 1, 2, 19 and 20, which are quickly picked down-up.

Be sure to apply pick-hand palm muting (P.M.) where indicated, such as to the open low E notes between chords during the verse riff (see bars 6, 7 and 11-18), as this is a key sonic element that contributes to the rhythmic definition and chunky quality of the various riffs. When performing the numerous power chord slides, use a light fret-hand touch and strive for accuracy, especially when sliding from G5 up to B5 in bars 3 and 4.

Dime's solo (section F) features the guitarist serving up lots of his signature screaming *over-bends* — those rising beyond a whole step in pitch. When performing these bends, hook your thumb over the top side of the fretboard (for leverage) and use at least two fingers to push the string upward, namely the 3rd finger, supported by the 2nd, or the 2nd and 1st.

"GOING TO HELL"
The Pretty Reckless

THIS HARD ROCKING title track from the Pretty Reckless' 2014 sophomore album kicks off with a punchy, syncopated single-note riff, deftly performed by guitarist Ben Phillips in drop-D tuning, transposed down a half step, what's commonly referred to as drop-C♯ tuning (low to high: C♯, G♯, C♯, F♯, A♯, D♯).

Using his open low 6th string as a springboard, Phillips "bounces" fretted notes off it, creating an interesting, angular melody with notes from the D minor pentatonic scale (D, F, G, A, C), most of which are played on the bottom string. Due to this and the tuning used, fingering the 16th notes in bar 2 cleanly can be tricky to do at tempo, requiring a couple of quick, precise position shifts. Moving back and forth from D at the 12th fret to F on the 5th string's 8th fret, you'll need to span four frets. If you use your pinkie to fret the D note, that will maximize your reach, shortening the shift or maybe even eliminating the need for it altogether. However, you may prefer to fret the D note with your more "sure-footed" ring finger (3) and shift your hand down to grab the F with your 1st finger.

The song's most technically challenging parts come right after this, in bars 3 and 5, both of which entail fingering a quick succession of 16th notes on the 6th string and performing fast, accurate shifts. You'll find this easier to do with a bit of practice, as your fingers, eyes and ears collectively memorize the targeted notes. Play this opening riff slowly at first, striving to maintain clean note articulations while gradually increasing the tempo. An alternative option is to finger some of the notes down in 3rd position — on the 5th string instead of the 6th — and/or play the A note open.

Phillips makes great use of strummed octaves throughout the arrangement, especially at section I (see bars 42-45), where he layers, with two guitar tracks, a sweet-sounding harmony strummed octaves part. At sections M and N, the guitarist deliberately bends strummed octaves sharp, by pushing the fretted notes upward (toward the 6th string), creating an intentionally ugly but artistic effect.

"WAITING FOR THE DAWN"
Walter Trout

WITH HIS DELANEY Strat-style guitar plugged directly into his trusty Mesa/Boogie Mark V 1x12 combo amp, veteran bluesman Walter Trout makes his instrument cry and sing on this soulful new, traditional Chicago blues-style downtempo minor blues song and proves how much tone really is in the hands of the player.

In a way reminiscent of Led Zeppelin's "Since I've Been Loving You" (and in the same key, C minor), the song begins with Trout taking an understated 12-bar solo chorus up front before the first verse gets under way. Making great use of his simple rig's highly touch-sensitive dynamic range, Trout alternately caresses and digs into his strings with both hands, varying his note attacks in expressive ways. Notice his use of *staccato articulations* (notes clipped short with the fret hand), as indicated by small dots over certain tab numbers, and gentle *bend vibratos*, for which a bent note is shaken upon reaching the target pitch. This is done by partially releasing the bend, by about a quarter step, then restoring it to pitch and repeating the sequence in a quick, even, measured way.

For this opening solo, as well as his longer and more ambitious solo that begins at section D, Trout draws notes mostly from the tried-and-true C minor pentatonic scale (C, E♭, F, G, B♭), which works beautifully over the minor blues progression, with the notes taking on a different harmonic implications when played over the changing chords. Trout uses various bends to sound additional pitches, some of which are outside the scale or between notes, as he does with the quarter-step bends in bars 39 and 40. He also frets notes that are outside the five-note scale, which add color to his lines and acknowledge and underscore the progression. For example, in bar 43, the guitarist plays D (1st string, 10th fret), which is the 2nd, or 9th, of C and the 5th of the underlying Gm chord (G, B♭, D). In bars 53 and 56, he plays a couple of long, interesting ascending runs, using finger slides, chromatic passing tones and targeted chord tones, such as A♭, which is the ♭3 of Fm (F, A♭, C).

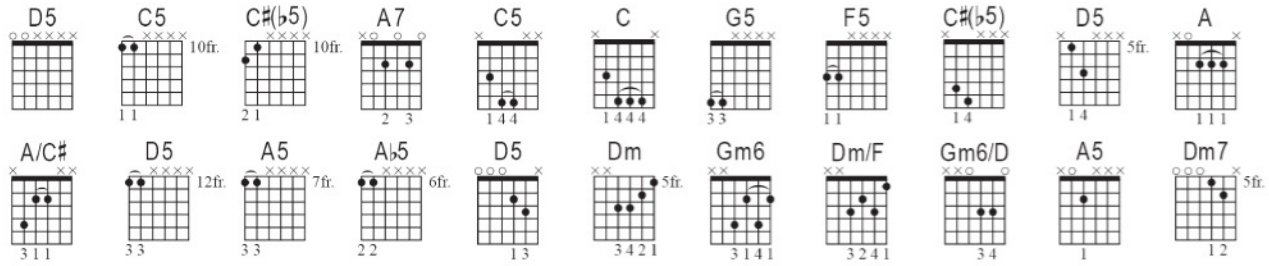
"GOING TO HELL"

The Pretty Reckless

As heard on **GOING TO HELL**

Words and music by TAYLOR MOMSEN *and* BENJAMIN PHILLIPS • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

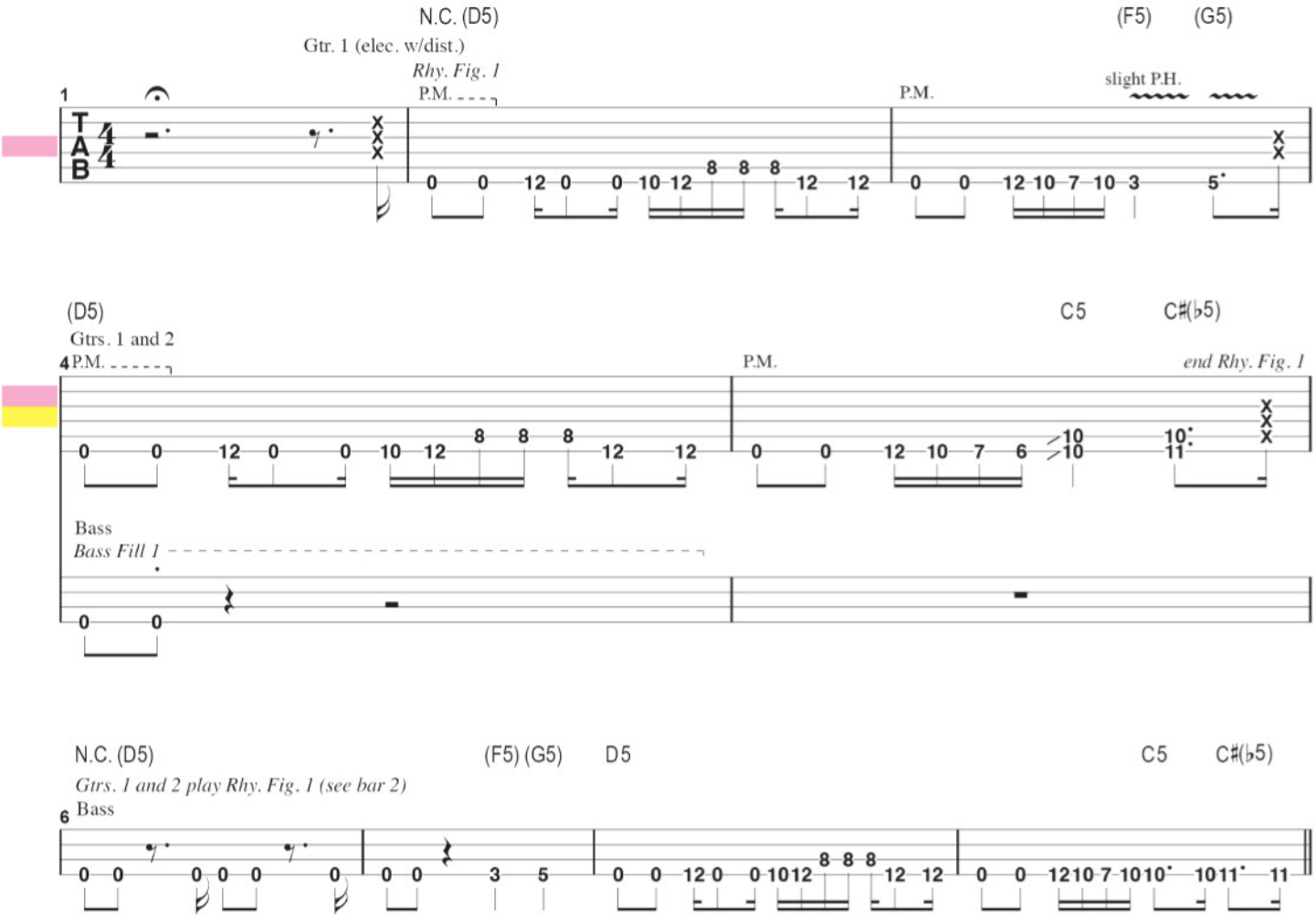
All guitars are in drop-D tuning, down one half step (low to high: C♯, G♯, C♯, F♯, A♯, D♯).
Bass tuning (low to high): C♯, G♯, C♯, F♯.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 115 (0:03)

(The end is the end)
Don't bless me father for I have sinned



"GOING TO HELL"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY TAYLOR MOMSEN AND BENJAMIN PHILLIPS.
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B **1st Verse** (0:20)

(w/double-time feel)

Father did you miss me I've been locked up a while I got caught for what I did but
Laid to rest all my confessions I gave way back when But now I'm versed so much worse so

N.C. (D5) (F5) (D5) (F5) (D5) (F5)

Gtr. 1

10 P.M. P.M. P.M. *(repeat previous bar)*

Gtr. 2

*Rhy. Fig. 2

P.M. P.M. P.M.

*Omit repeat on recall.

Bass

*Bass Fig. 1

*Omit repeat on recall.

took it all in style
I am back again And he said

(D5) (A♭5) (A5) A7

13 P.M. P.M. P.M.

P.M. P.M. P.M. *end Rhy. Fig. 2*

end Bass Fig. 1

Bass Fill 3 (3:34)

Fill 1 (3:40)

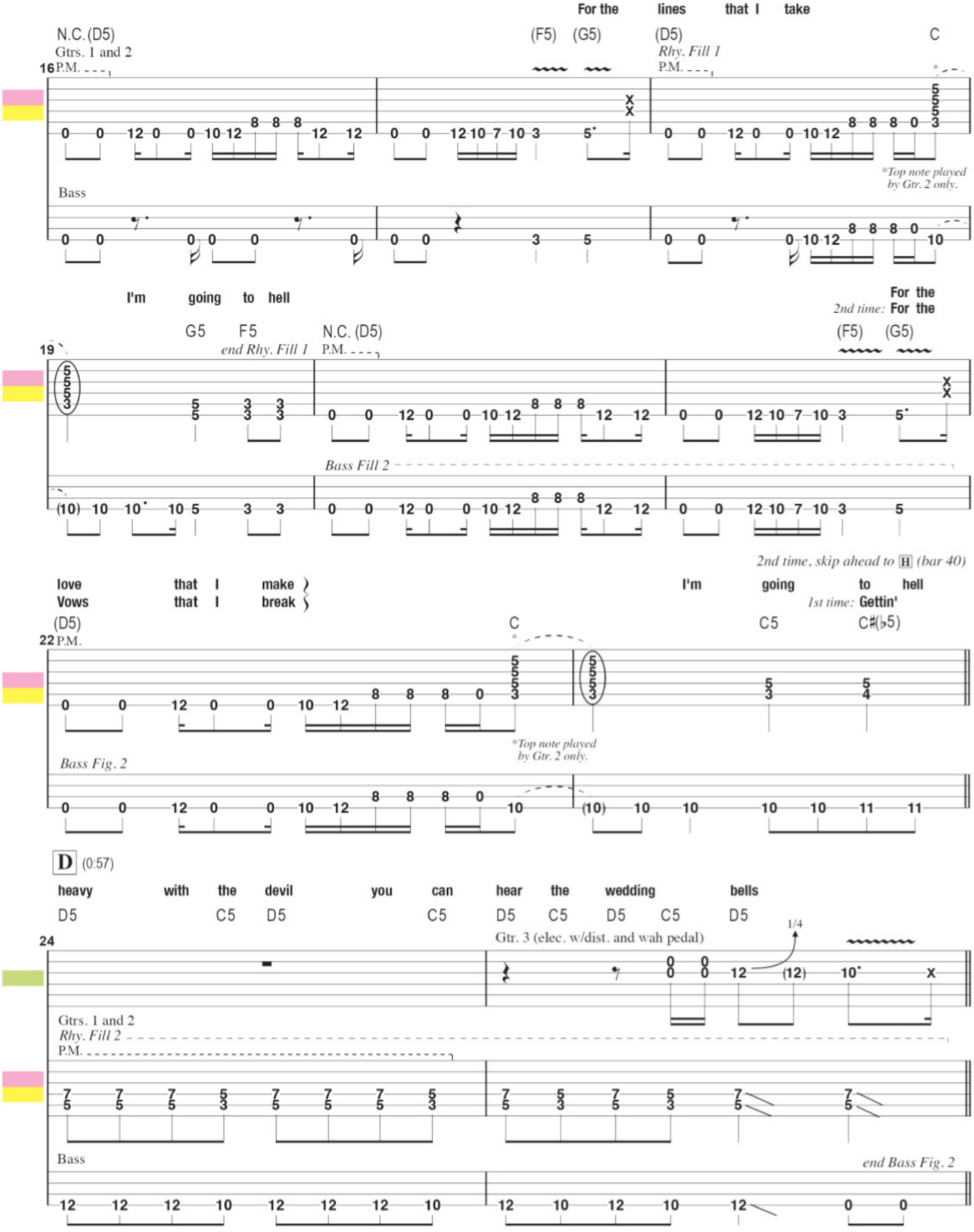
D5 C5 D5 C5 D5 C5 D5 C5 D5

Gtr. 3

P.H. 1/4 P.H. 1/4

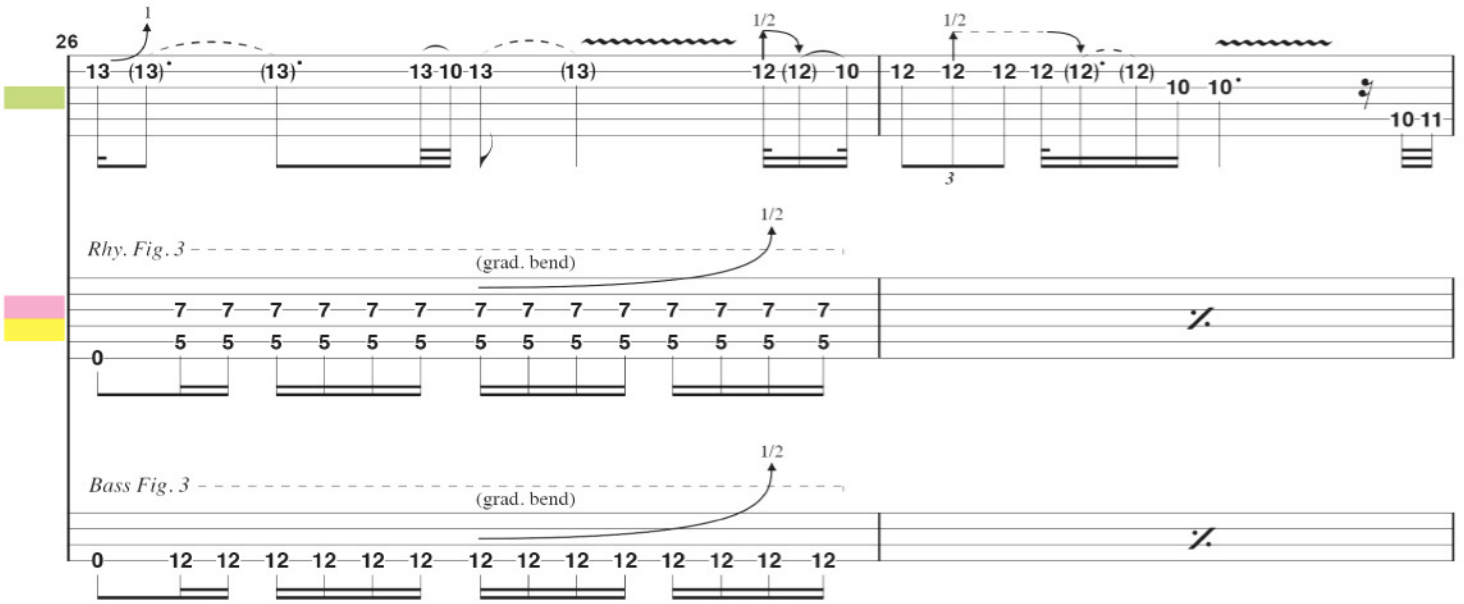
pitch: A G

C **1st and 2nd Chorus** (0:41, 1:31)

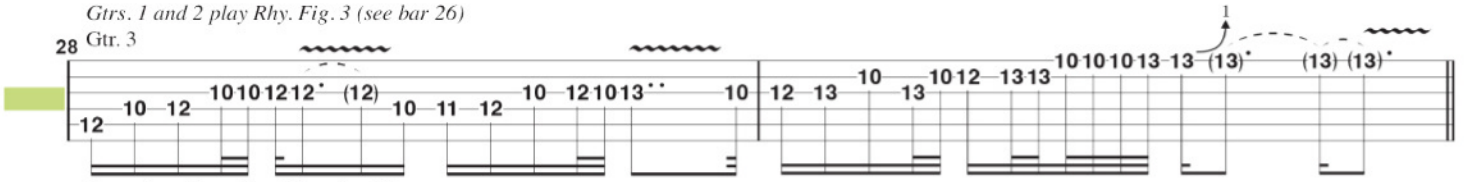


E **Guitar Solo** (1:01)

N.C. (D5)



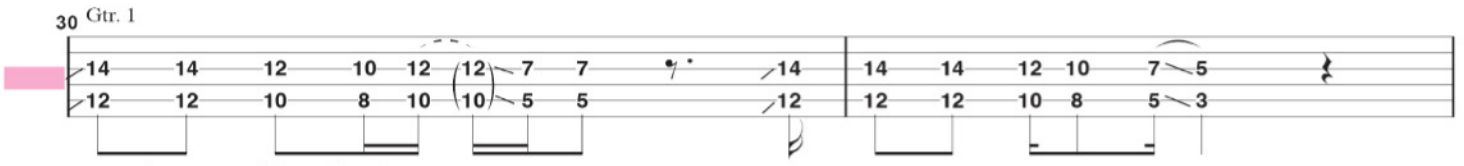
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 26)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 26)

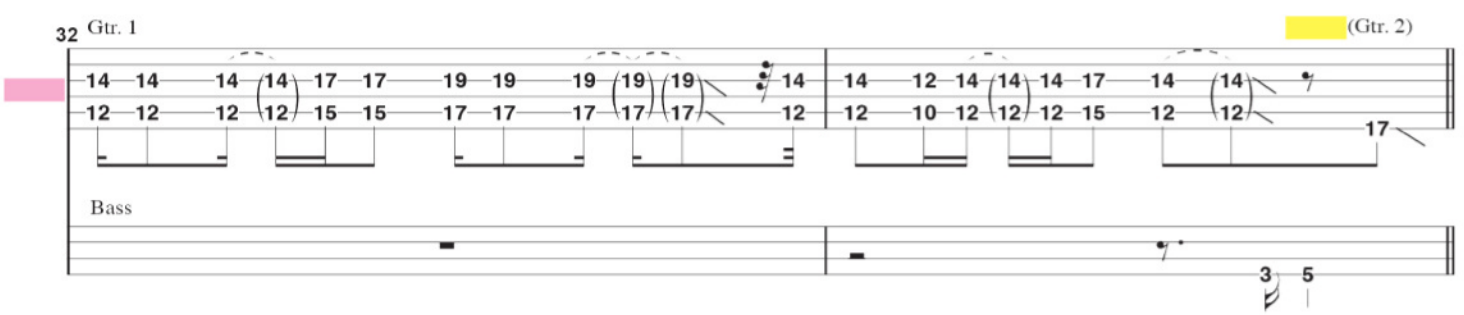
F **2nd Verse** (1:10)

Father did you miss me Don't ask me where I've been You



Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see bar 4)

know I know yes I've been told I redefine a sin And



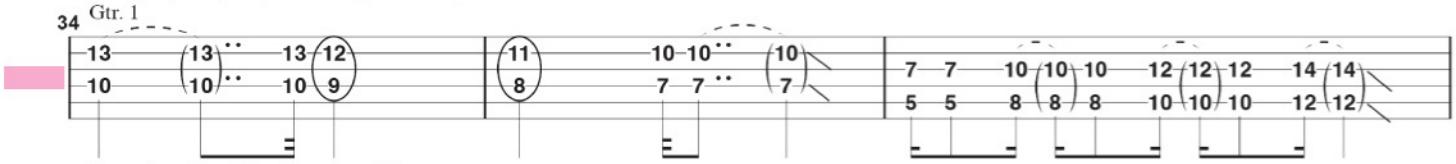
G (1:18)

I don't know what's driving me to put this in my head Mary I wish I could die

N.C. (D5) (F5) (D5) (F5) (D5) (F5)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 10)

34 Gtr. 1



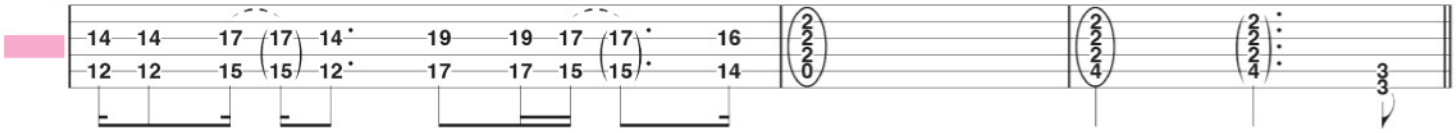
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 10)

Go back to **C** *2nd Chorus (bar 16)*

Maybe I am dead And he said

(D5) (A♭5) A A/C♯ F5

37



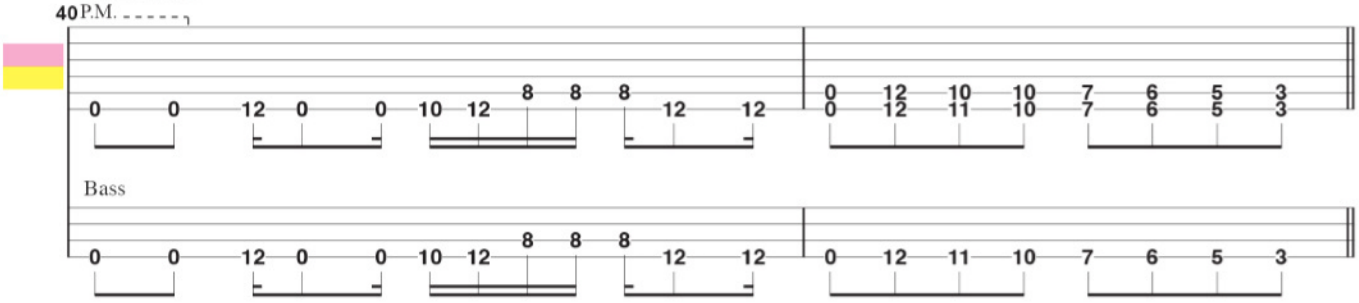
H (1:47, 3:23)

For the For the

D5 C♯(♭5) C5 A5 A♭5 G5 F5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

40 P.M.



Bass

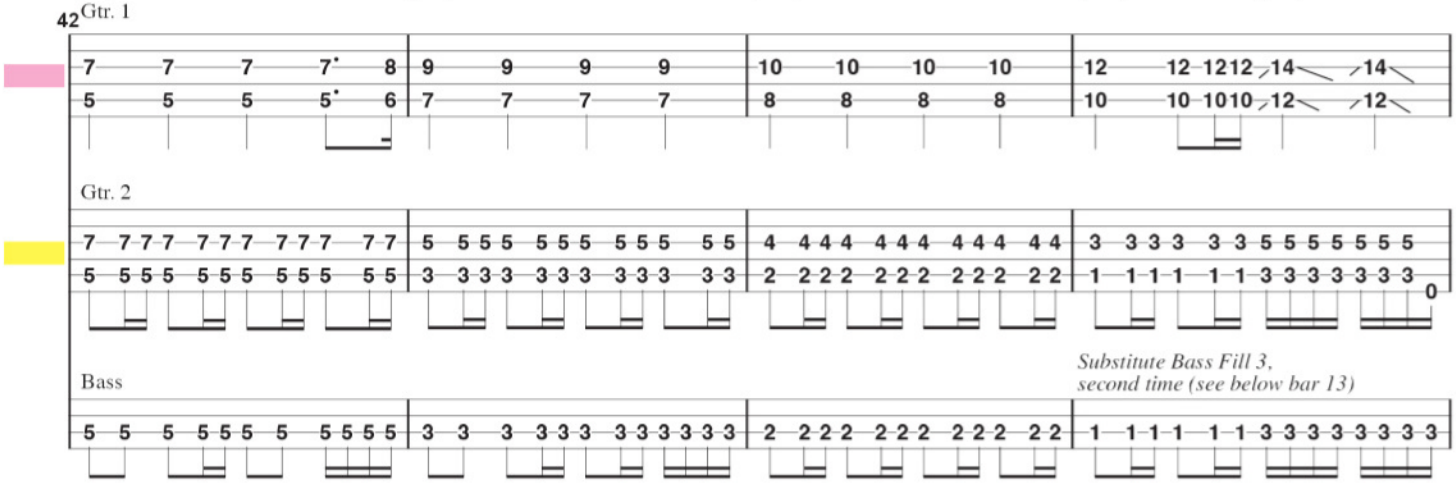
I (1:52, 3:28)

ways that I hurt when I'm hiking up my skirt I am sitting on a throne while they're buried in the dirt For the

way I condescend and never lend a hand My arrogance is making this head buried in the sand For the

(D5) (C5) (G/B) (B♭5) (C5)

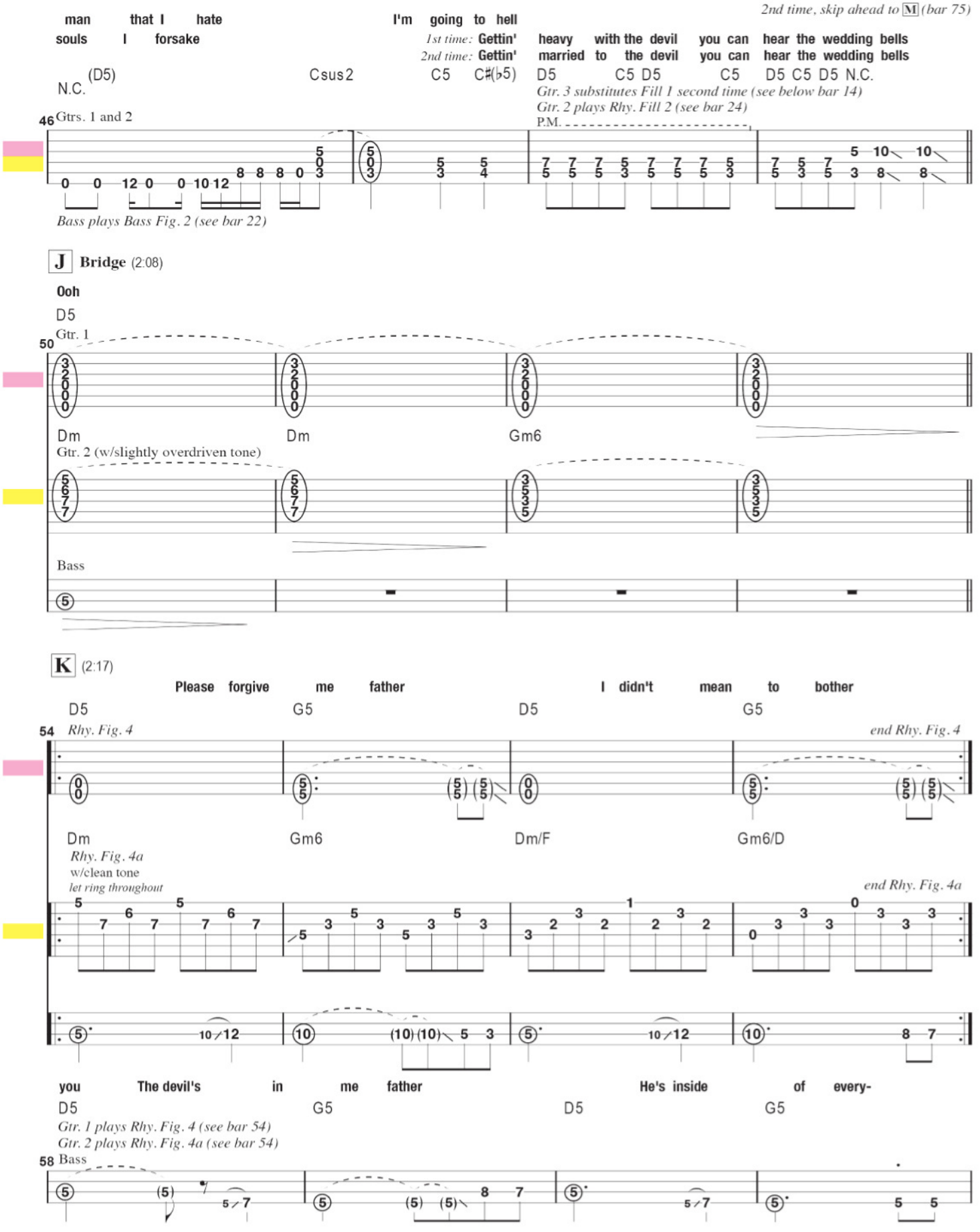
42 Gtr. 1

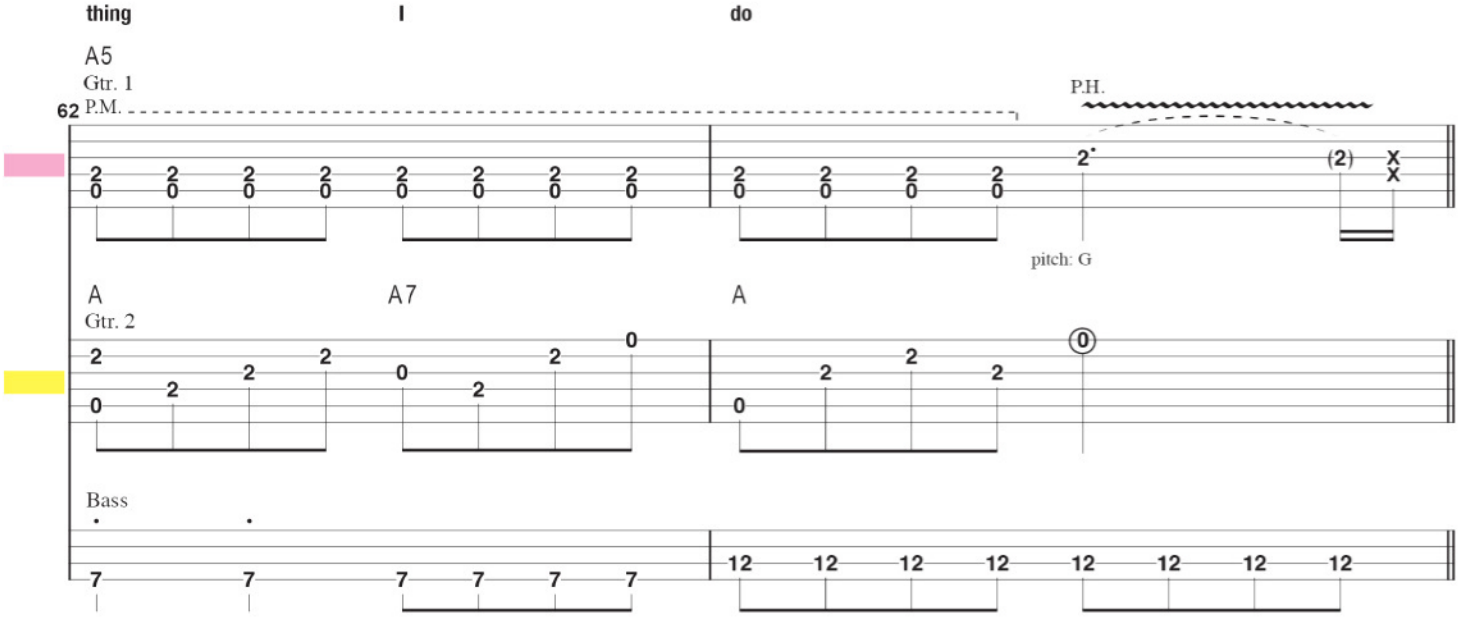


Gtr. 2

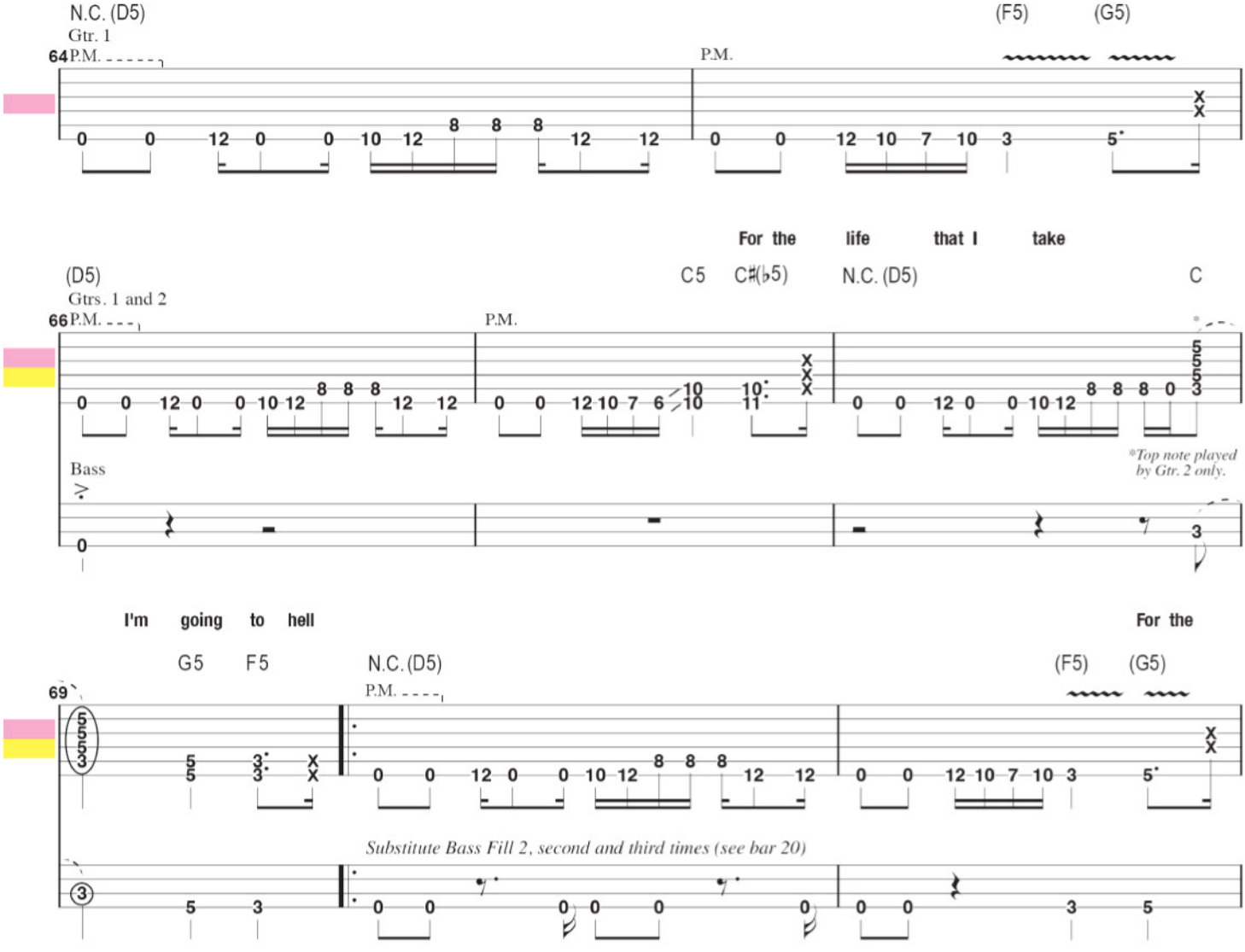
Bass

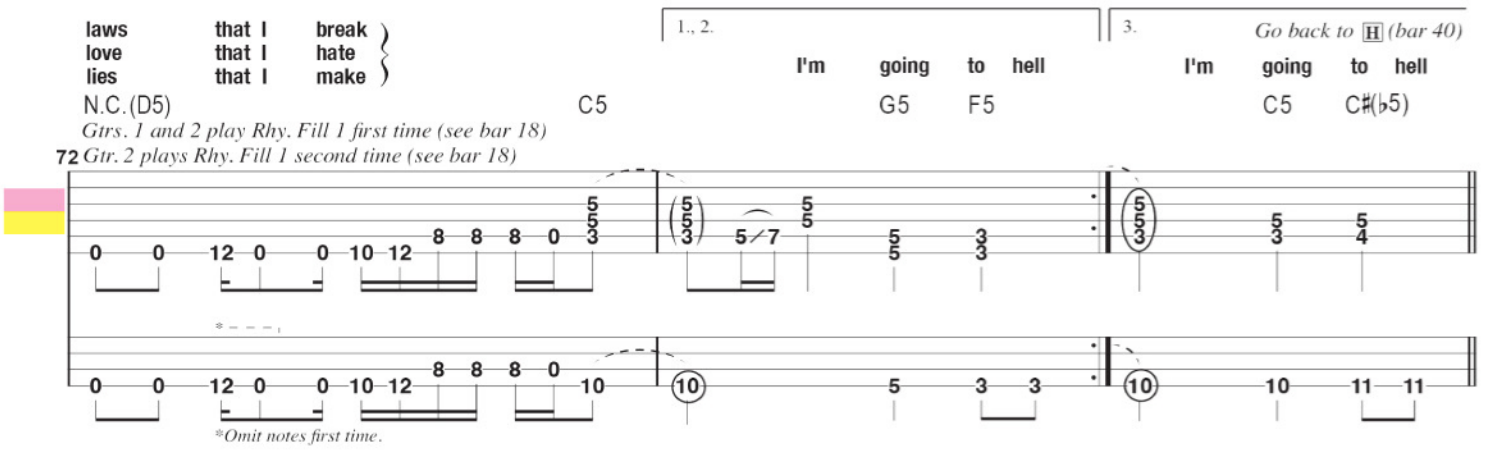
Substitute Bass Fill 3, second time (see below bar 13)

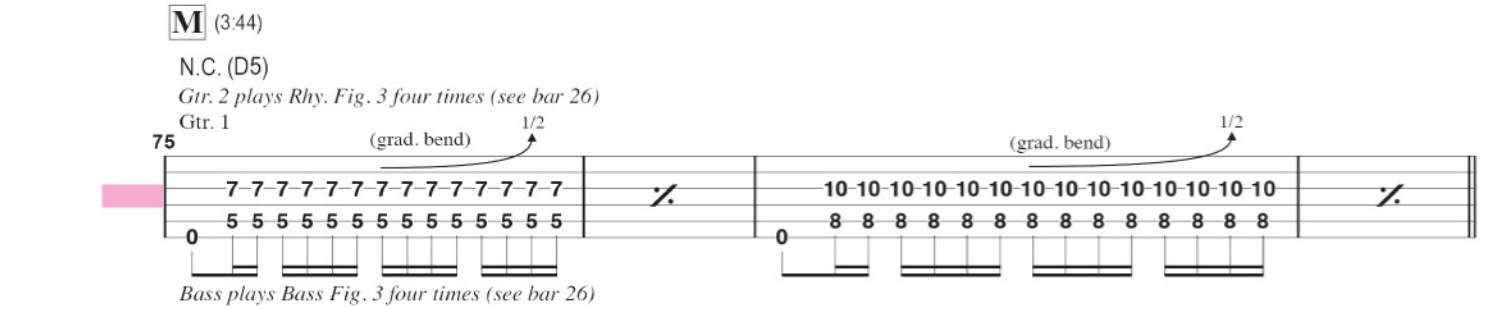

2nd time, skip ahead to M (bar 75)
man that I hate
souls I forsake
I'm going to hell
1st time: Gettin'
2nd time: Gettin'
heavy with the devil you can hear the wedding bells
married to the devil you can hear the wedding bells
N.C. (D5)
Csus2
C5 C♯(♭5)
D5 C5 D5 C5 D5 C5 D5 N.C.
Gtr. 3 substitutes Fill 1 second time (see below bar 14)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 2 (see bar 24)
P.M.
46 Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 22)
J Bridge (2:08)
Ooh
D5
Gtr. 1
50
Dm
Dm
Gm6
Gtr. 2 (w/slightly overdriven tone)
Bass
K (2:17)
Please forgive me father
I didn't mean to bother
D5
G5
D5
G5
54 Rhy. Fig. 4
end Rhy. Fig. 4
Dm
Gm6
Dm/F
Gm6/D
Rhy. Fig. 4a
w/clean tone
let ring throughout
end Rhy. Fig. 4a
you The devil's in me father
He's inside of every-
D5
G5
D5
G5
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 (see bar 54)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 4a (see bar 54)
58 Bass

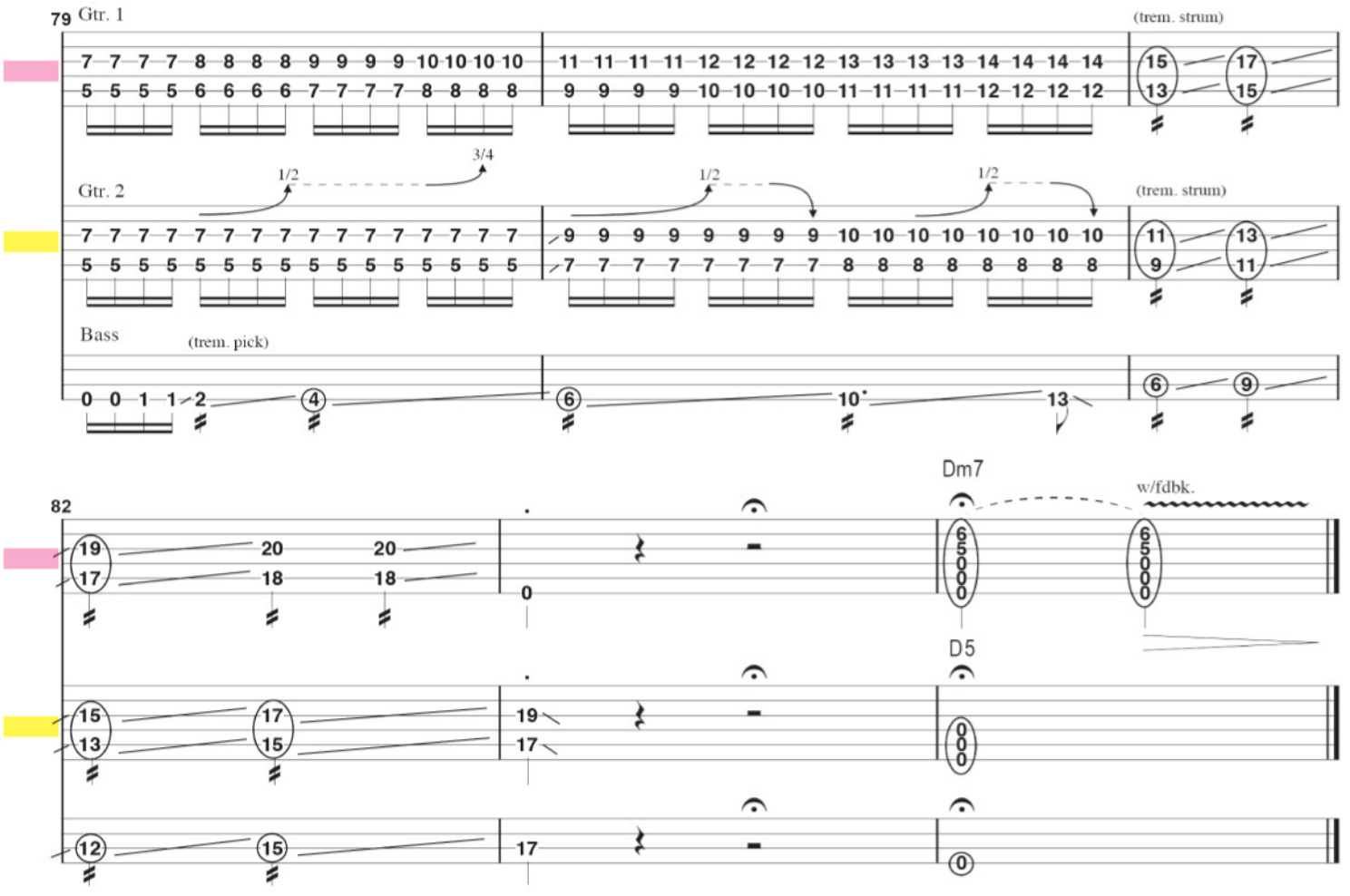


L **Breakdown** (2:46)




laws that I break
love that I hate
lies that I make
1., 2.
3.
Go back to H (bar 40)
I'm going to hell
I'm going to hell
N.C. (D5)
C5
G5
F5
C5
C♯(♭5)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fill 1 first time (see bar 18)
72
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 second time (see bar 18)
*Omit notes first time.


M (3:44)
N.C. (D5)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 four times (see bar 26)
Gtr. 1
75
(grad. bend)
1/2
(grad. bend)
1/2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 four times (see bar 26)


N Outro (3:53)
(w/double-time feel)
(grad. increase tempo)
79
Gtr. 1
(trem. strum)
Gtr. 2
1/2
3/4
1/2
1/2
(trem. strum)
Bass
(trem. pick)
82
Dm7
w/fdbk.
D5

"WAITING FOR THE DAWN"

Walter Trout

As heard on **RIDE**

Words and Music by WALTER TROUT • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

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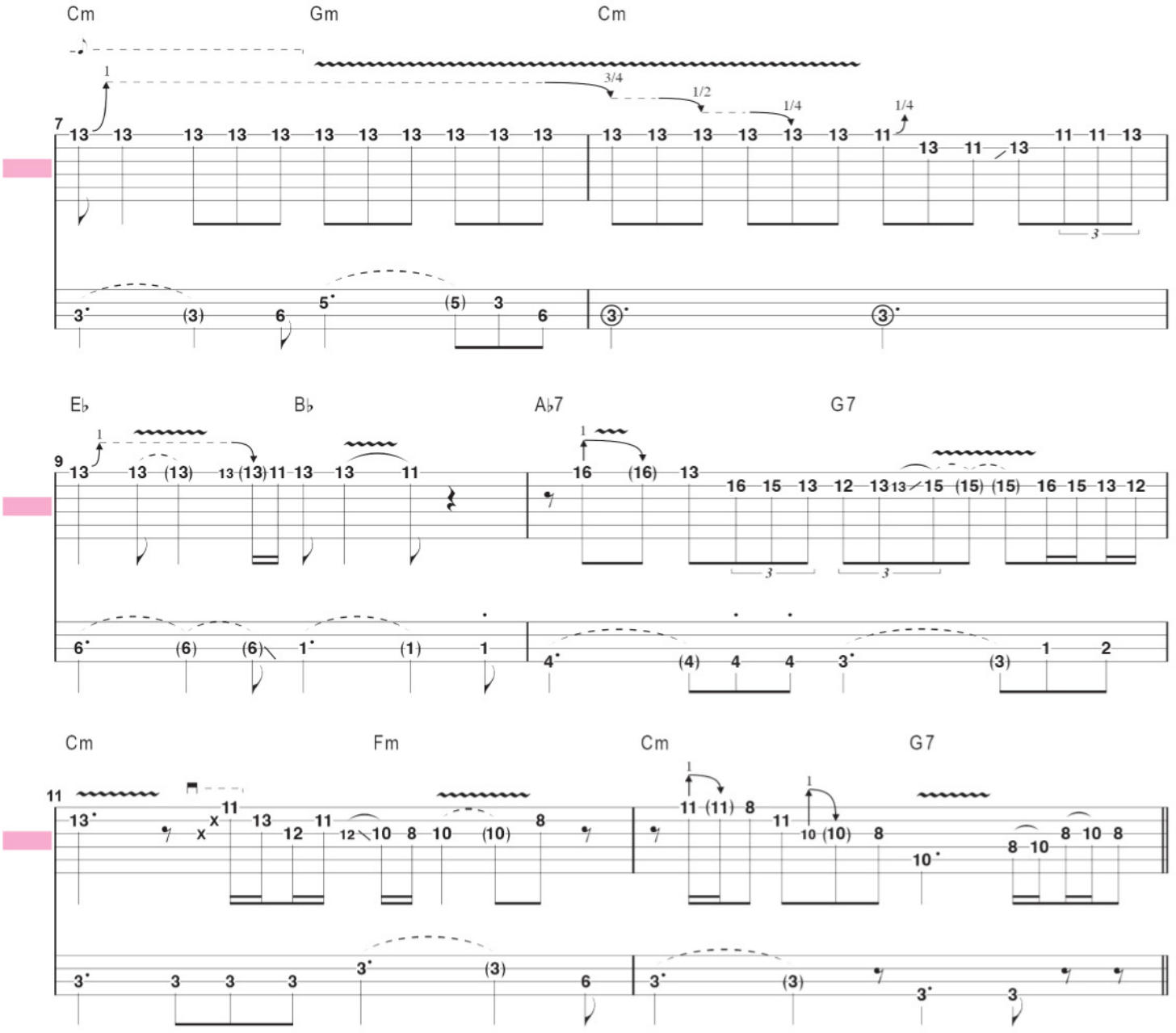
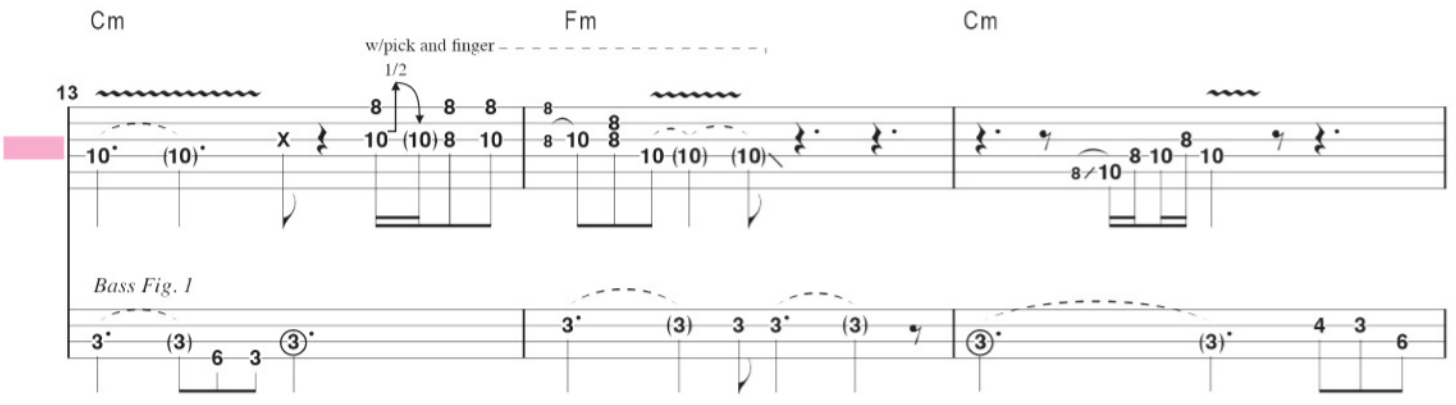


B **1st Verse** (0:53)

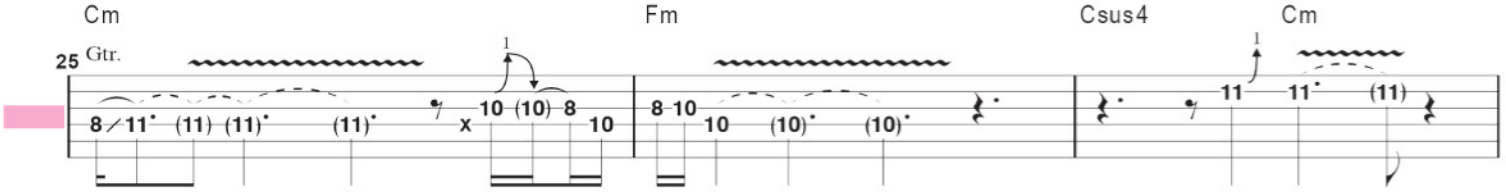
There's a shadow on my heart and I feel like there's a curtain on the sun Yes I do



Now there's a shadow on my heart
and I feel like there's a curtain
on the sun
Fm7
16
Cm7
Gm7
Cm
19
My baby's gone
yes she's gone
I'm here
I'm just waiting
E♭
B♭
B♭7
G7
let ring
let ring
21
for the dawn
Cm
Fm
Cm
G7
23
end Bass Fig. 1

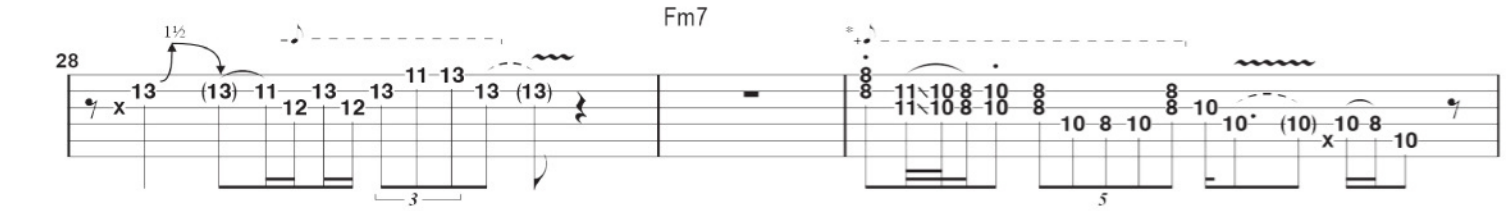
C **2nd Verse** (1:45)

There ain't nothin' movin' It's so hard for me to carry on



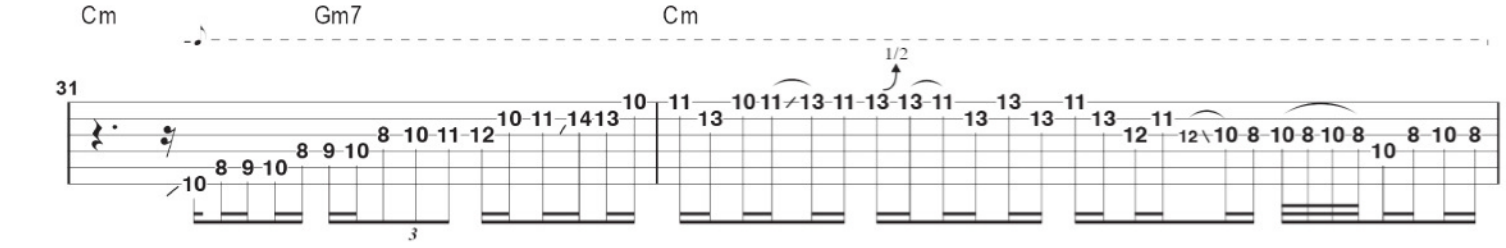
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 13)

Ain't nothin' movin' It's so

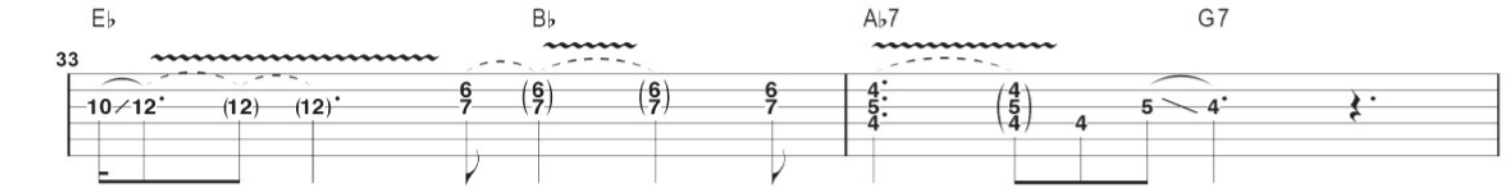


**Notes played slightly "ahead" of the beat.*

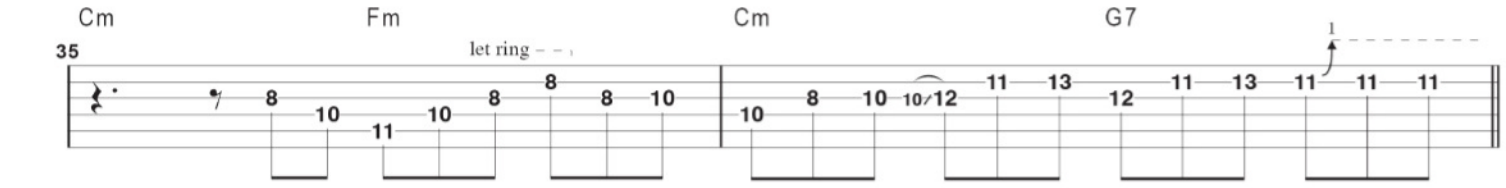
hard for me to carry on



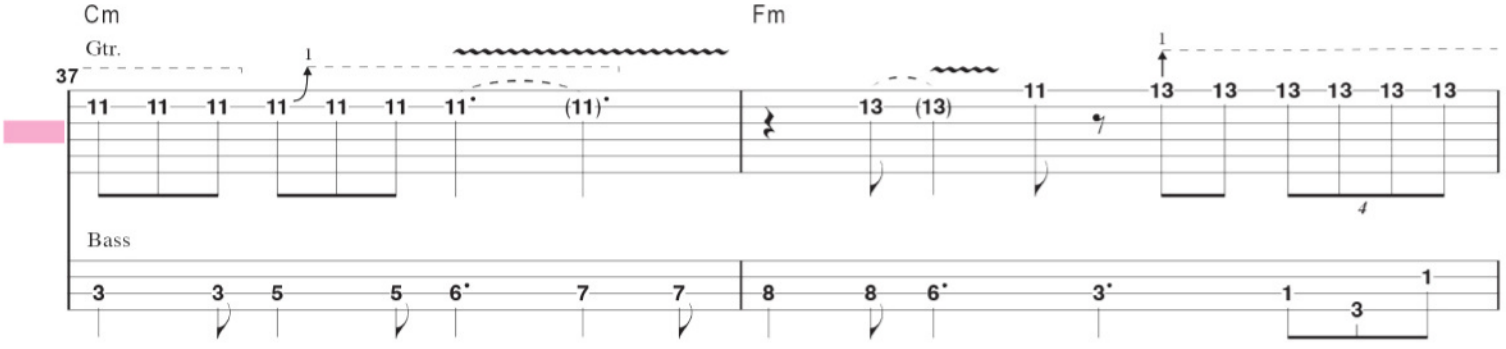
Now I lay here in the darkness baby and I'm just waiting for the dawn



I'm waiting for the dawn

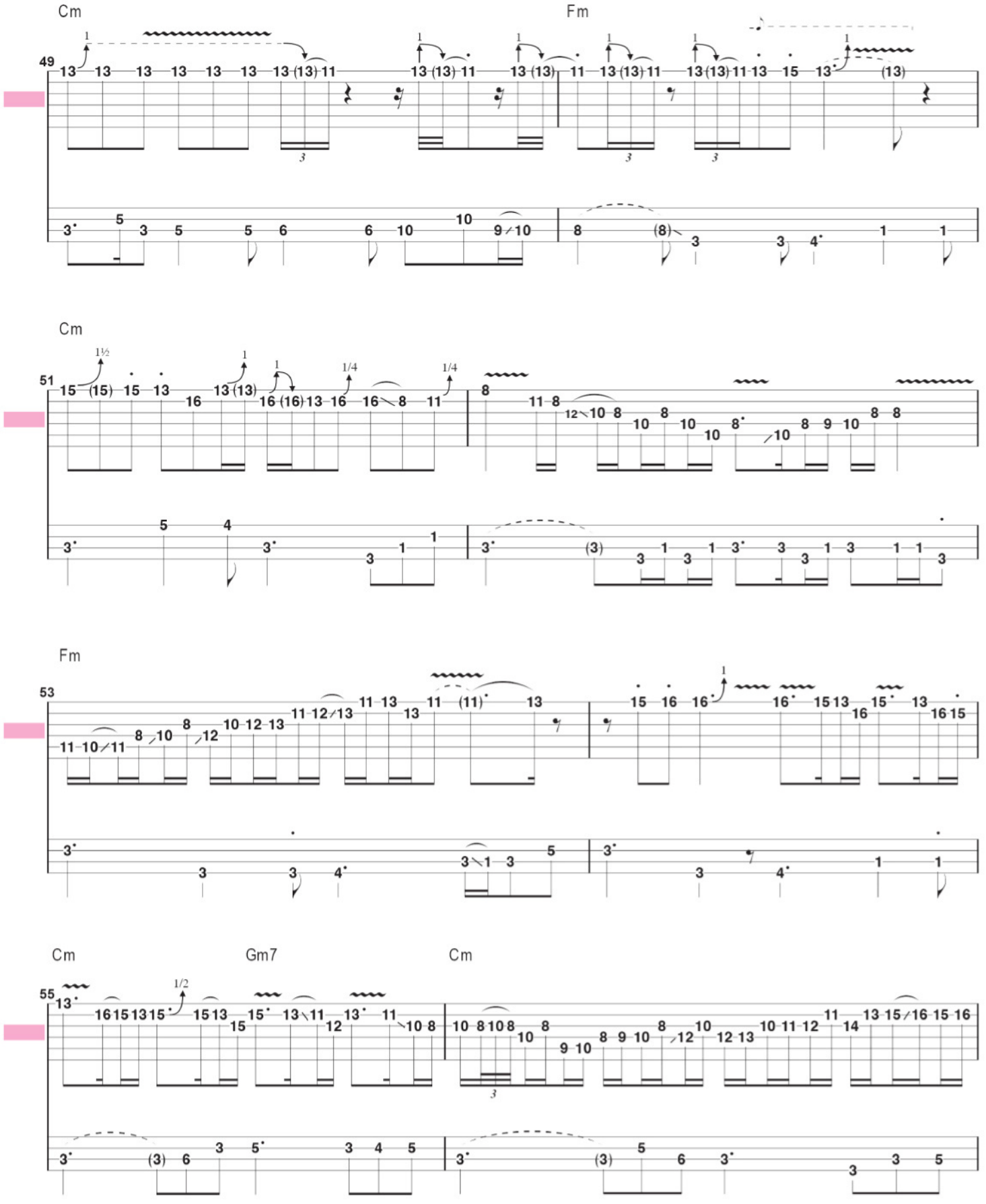


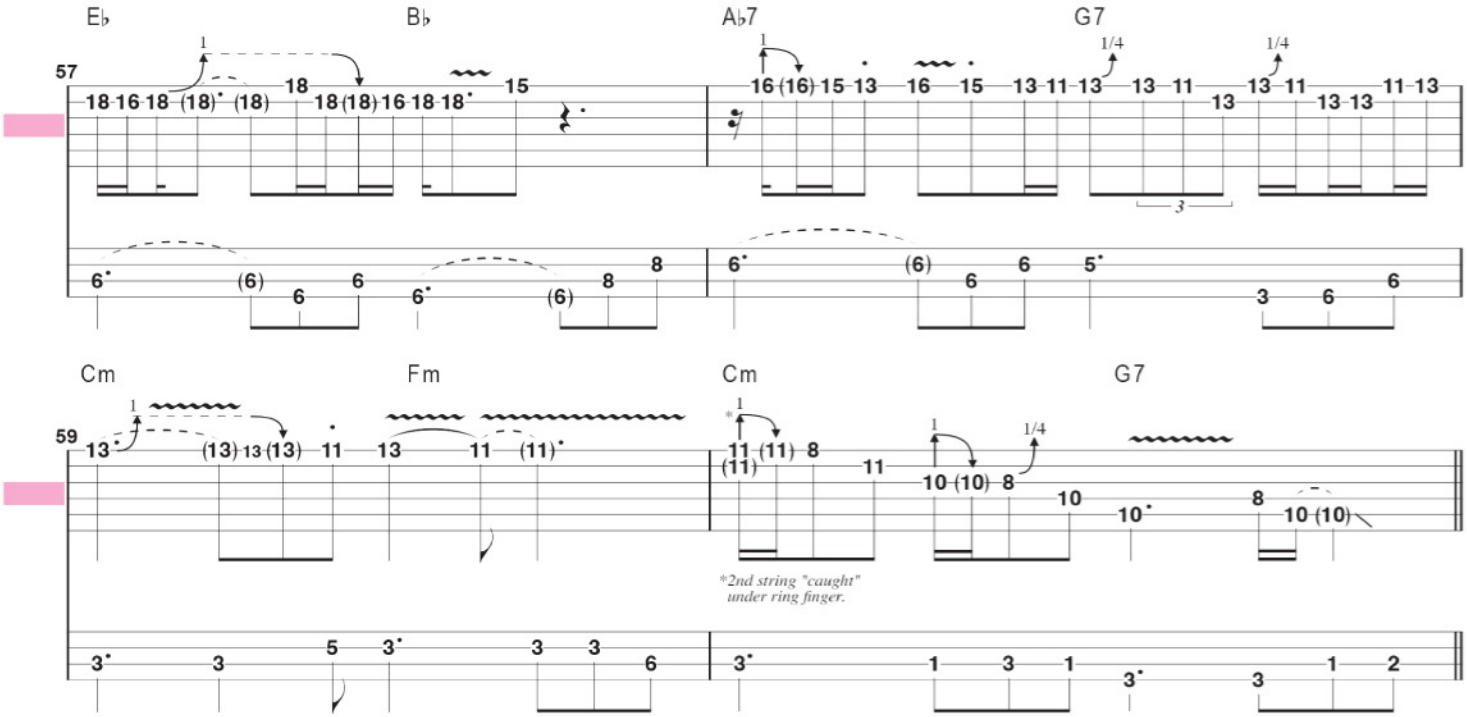
D **Guitar Solo** (2:38)



Cm
39
*2nd and 3rd strings "caught" under ring finger.
Fm
41
*3rd string "caught" under ring finger.
Cm
Gm7
Cm
43
let ring
E♭
B♭
A♭7
G7
45
Cm
Fm
Cm
G7
47

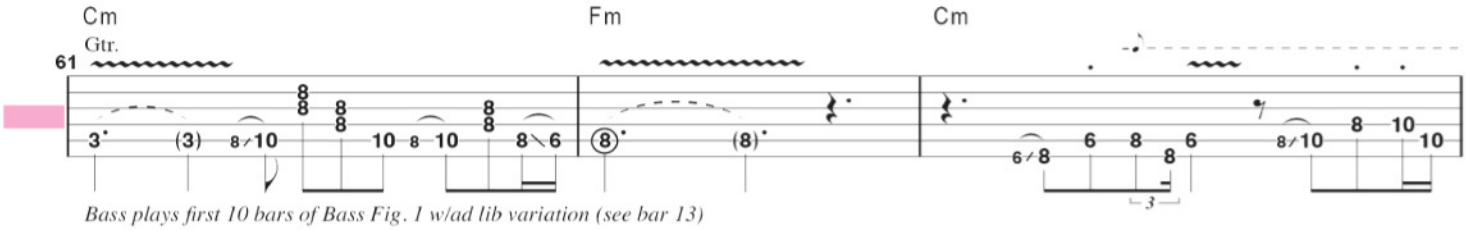
E (3:30)





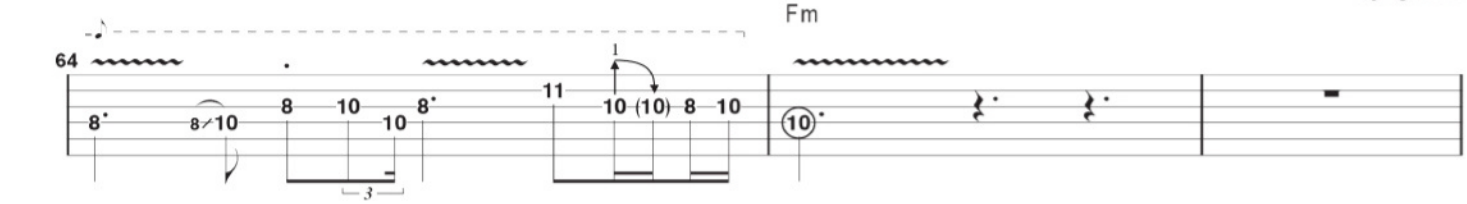
F **3rd Verse** (4:22)

The night is never-ending when you're laying there all alone

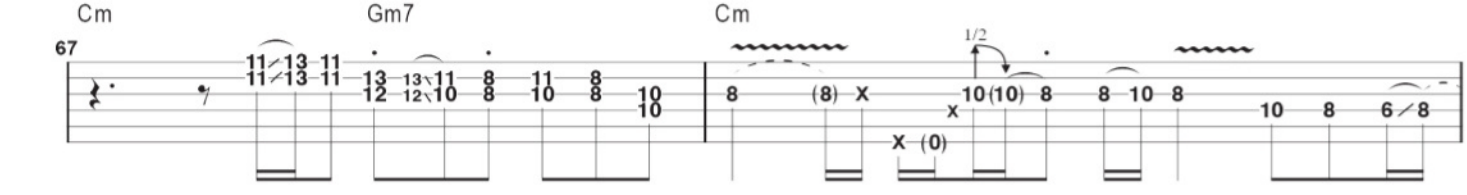


Bass plays first 10 bars of Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 13)

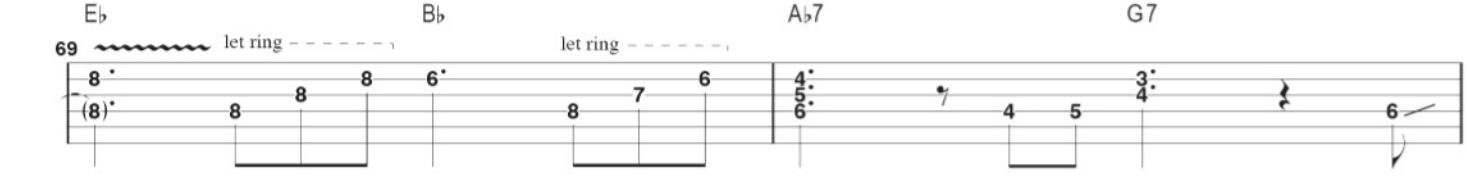
The night is never-ending when you're laying there laying there laying there

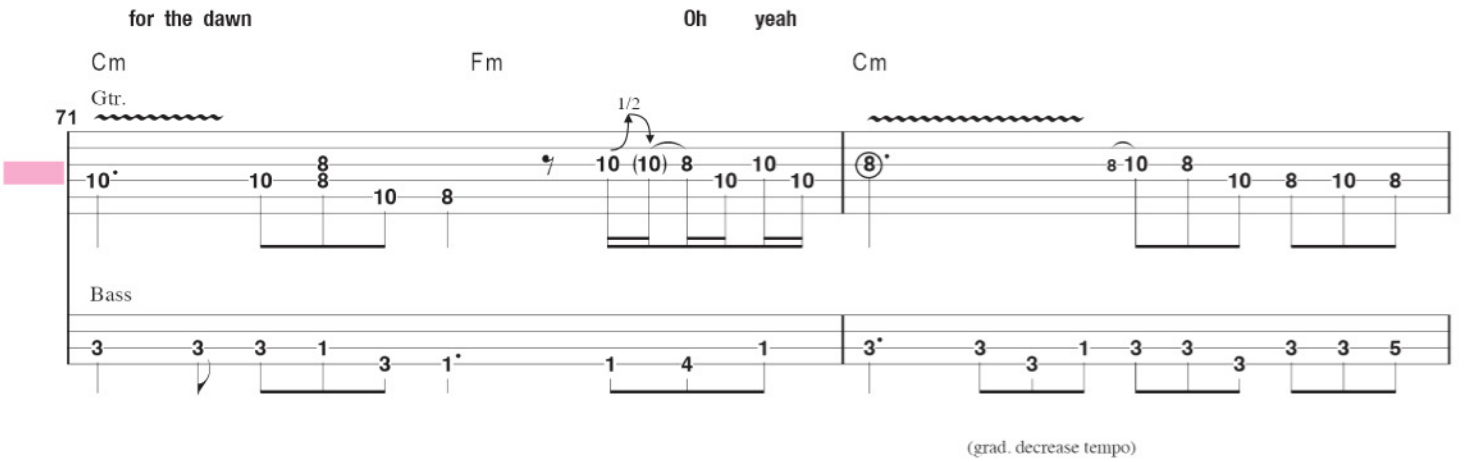


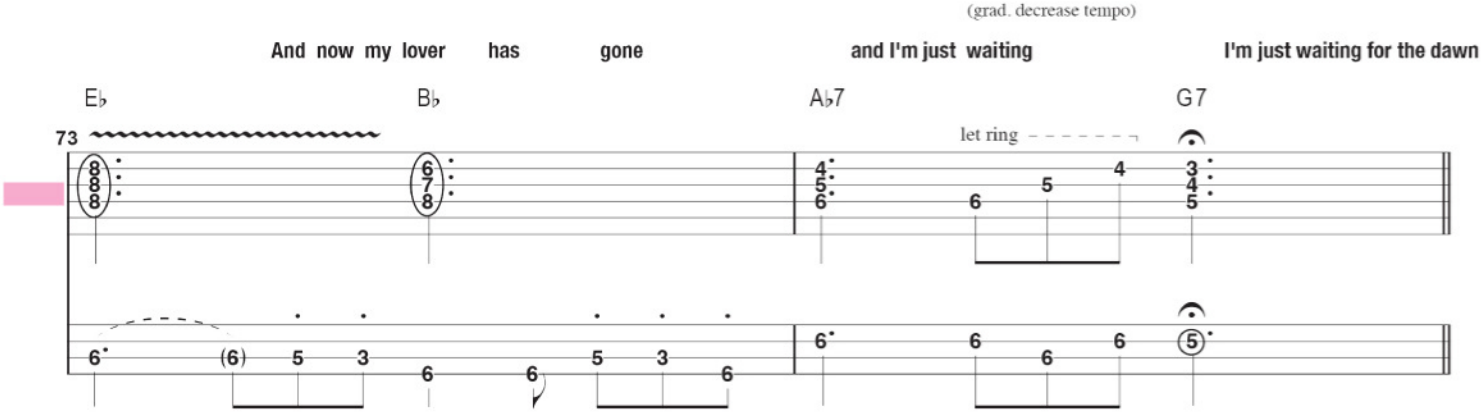
all alone



And now my lover has gone and I'm just I'm here just waiting

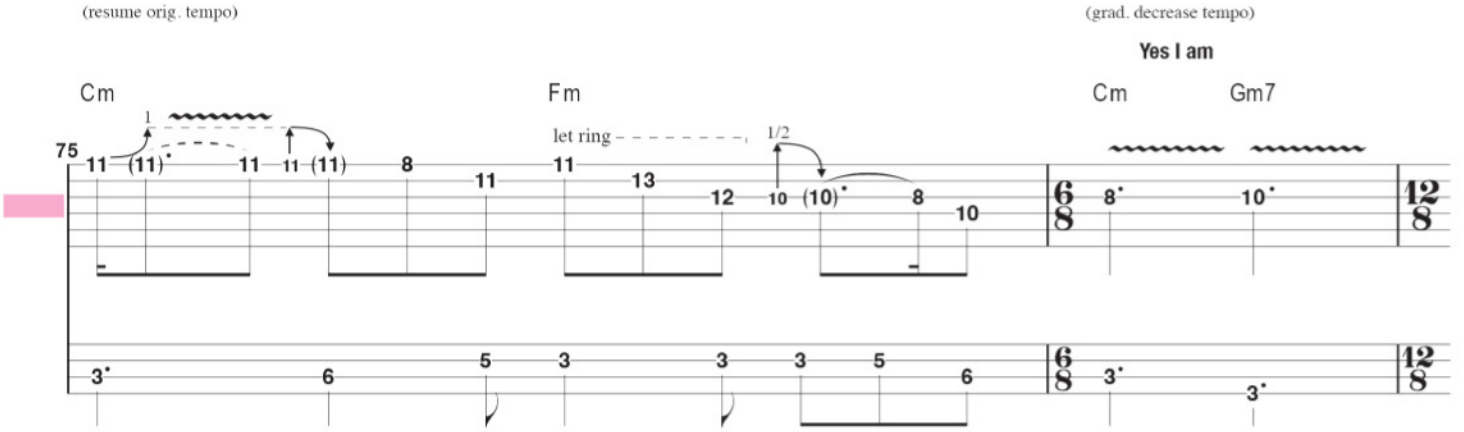






G **Outro** (5:27)

(resume orig. tempo)



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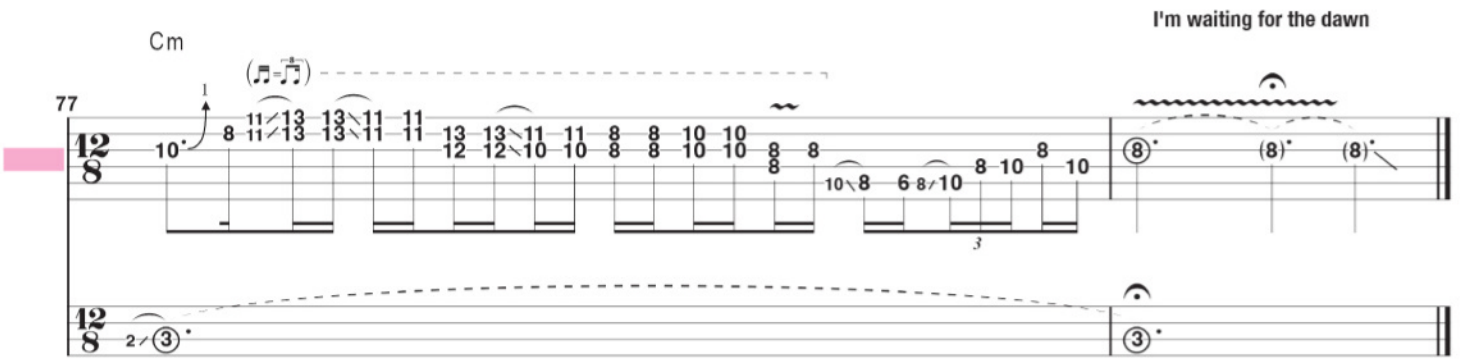

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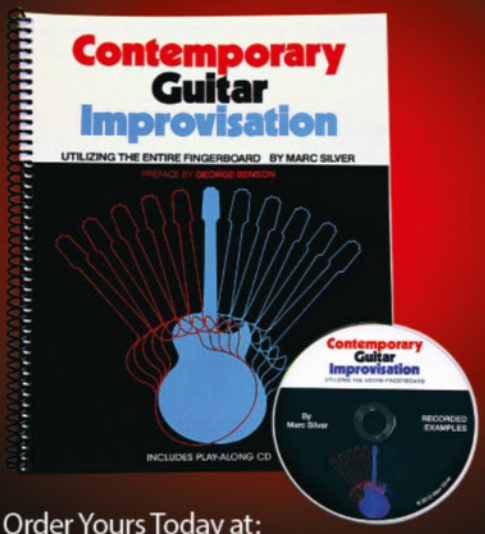

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1954-PRESENT GIBSON LES PAUL JUNIOR

CATEGORY: SOLIDBODY ELECTRIC GUITAR

THE SIMPLE JOYS of life don't get much simpler than the Gibson Les Paul Junior. Featuring a solitary P90 single-coil pickup, volume and tone controls and a 22-fret neck, the humble Junior is about as basic as it gets, but at the end of the day it provides everything a player needs. Featuring a body made from a flat slab of mahogany, a hefty (at least on most Fifties models) set-in neck also crafted from mahogany and a rosewood fingerboard, it didn't skimp on tone woods or craftsmanship, and as a result the Junior delivers big time when it comes to tone.

Although the Les Paul Junior was initially marketed as a low-cost student model, it still was a pro-quality instrument through and through. I'm positive it was Gibson president Ted McCarty's one-finger salute to Leo Fender, as the Junior's original $110 price tag in 1954 was $39.50 less (nearly 25 percent!) than Fender's cheapest model at the time, the Esquire.

Gibson made several changes to the Junior over the years, starting with moving the pickup further from its wraparound bar bridge in 1956, followed by a double-cutaway re-design in 1958 that provided unrestricted access to the entire fingerboard, in turn followed by the SG-style body shape revision with a slimmer thickness, beveled edges and pointy cutaway horns. Shortly after introducing the latter the name changed from Les Paul Junior to SG Junior.

Finishes were limited to sunburst for the 1954-58 single cutaway variant and cherry red for the double cutaway models. The other alternative was the Les Paul TV, whose only difference from the Junior was its yellow/tan "limed mahogany" finish.

SUGGESTED RIGS

The Les Paul Junior's solitary P90 pickup pairs well with just about any amp, but if you're looking for something distinctive, try a vintage Seventies Ampeg with the 800Hz midrange switch engaged, which is the key to **Joe Perry's** early **Aerosmith** tones. For a more easily accessible modern pairing, a Friedman Small Box works well with a Junior's volume knob for going from clean sheen to a raging roar.

The single-cutaway, double-cutaway and SG-style body models all have their individual charms, but the overall mojo remains the same — bold, ballsy tone and playability on par with the most expensive Gibson models. Some say the lack of a hollowed-out pickup chamber near the neck is the reason the Junior has more midrange bark and beefier bass than its dual-pickup cousin the Les Paul Special, and there may be some truth to that.

Lest one think that the Junior is a one-trick pony, a little nimble knob manipulation can deliver a rich rainbow of tones, turning down the volume for crisp cleans and backing down the tone for singing, vocal-like mids.

Despite its original "student model" stature, the Junior has remained a favorite of numerous pros over the decades. Most famously, it howled like horny coyote in the hands of Leslie West on Mountain's "Mississippi Queen." Joe Perry wielded one on "Walk This Way" and various early Aerosmith tracks, as did Steve Hunter with Alice Cooper and Lou Reed, most notably on "Sweet Jane." Dave Peverett was a fool for various Juniors with Foghat, and Mick Ralphs frequently played one throughout his stints with both Mott the Hoople and Bad Company.

Thanks to its no-frills design, the Junior became a perennial icon of punk, seen in the early days in the hands of Johnny Thunders, Mick Jones with the Clash and Paul Westerberg and today with Billie Joe Armstrong and his various Gibson signature versions. It's even an occasional stage and studio companion for guitarists named Keith (Richards and Urban).

The Les Paul Junior has gone in and out of production over the years, with the longest continuous absence taking place from 1971 (when the SG Junior variant was discontinued) through the mid Eighties, but it's still going strong today. Gibson's basic production Junior model — based on the "sweet spot" single-cutaway 1956-57 version — sells for about $1,600, which isn't too far off of the Junior's original price adjusted for inflation (about $1,200).

Dollar-for-dollar, it's still one of the best values out there when it comes to ball-busting tone, vibe and thrills.

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A Gibson Custom 1957 Les Paul Junior Single Cut Reissue (Murphy Lab TV Yellow)

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